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JOHN M. McMAHON

PARALYSIN CAVE

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PARALYSIN CAVE

IMPOTENCE, PERCEPTION, AND TEXT IN THE *SATYRICA* OF PETRONIUS

BY

JOHN M. McMAHON

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Feliciae Carissimae

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PREFACE

This book is an extensively revised and expanded version of a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the Department of Classical Studies and the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of Pennsylvania in May of 1993. It examines the ways in which the problem of male sexual dysfunction is portrayed in literary contexts by analyzing the popular perceptions of its causes, the approaches toward traditional methods for treatment, and the iatromagical belief system upon which these methods are predicated. In addition, it draws conclusions about how the social implications of impotence are reflected by the genre of the texts in which sexual dysfunction plays a thematic role. Finally, it analyzes appropriate passages in the *Satyrica* of Petronius in which the personal and social difficulties caused by sexual dysfunction find resolution in the first-person expression afforded its main character.

I have been fortunate in having had substantial support for the efforts that resulted in the writing of this volume. Some of the early research on the relationship of male sexuality and the genus *Allium*, which had its ultimate beginnings in Ralph Rosen's seminar on Old Comedy in the Spring of 1990, was funded by an Herb Society of America Research and Education Grant in 1991-92. The fellowship support for the research and writing of the thesis itself came from the Department of Classical Studies, the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences of the University of Pennsylvania, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. For the actual writing of the original version, first and foremost I must express gratitude to my thesis director Joseph Farrell for devoting many hours of valuable discussion to the project; his assistance was instrumental in helping me to organize a welter of diffuse and obscure material and to give it clarity and literary relevance. Wesley Smith, ever supportive of my research efforts and ever understanding of my affinity toward natural history, provided many useful insights to the discussion of medical and scientific documentation and provided me with the appropriate remedies to relieve the symptoms of verbal congestion. Jim "Sparky" O'Donnell, called upon for advisory service in the late innings, willingly obliged with fine relief effort. I am also indebted to all of these for their continued encouragement and advice.

In the case of the present volume, I owe my thanks to the Le Moyne College Research and Development Committee for support

for editorial matters. For bibliographical help everyone associated with the Le Moyne College Interlibrary Loan Service has rightly earned my gratitude, as has Nancy Shawcross of the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania. Gareth Schmeling, who read the original thesis, offered useful advice for its improvement and also provided me with copies of his own work, as did Judy Hallett. Job Lisman and Gera van Bedaf of E. J. Brill rendered prompt and understanding assistance at every step of the way during the production of the book. The anonymous reader for Brill provided numerous and valuable suggestions for improving and expanding my original efforts. I extend my gratitude as well to the Musée départmental des Antiquités in Rouen for the photo of the Kleophrades hydria (Plate 4) and to Mr. Andrew N. Gagg of Photo Flora in Worcester, UK, for the fine images (Plates 6-8) of European aroids.

On a personal level, I would like to express thanks to my colleagues in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures for their interest, their encouragement, and their patience during the writing of this book. Friends and family, and especially my daughters Michele and Danielle, have been supportive and understanding of my commitments to this work. Finally, I wish to thank Felicia McMahon for her lively discussions about the folkloric nature of some of the evidence I worked with, for her advice and insight during this entire effort, for her constant support for all my academic projects while in the midst of her own, and most of all for having enabled us to accomplish so much together.

While the work itself is intended primarily for those who have an interest in the literature and life of the Greco-Roman world, I have tried to present the material in a manner accessible and useful to a wider and non-classicist audience, providing as much additional information in the notes as might prove helpful to that readership. Except where I have paraphrased closely or where the meaning of an original word or passage is easily understood, I have provided my own translations for all Greek and Latin. The abbreviations for ancient works follow those in the third edition of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* and the ninth edition of *The Liddell and Scott Greek-English Lexicon*. I have also provided a list of abbreviations for frequently cited works. In these and in all other cases, any lapses of academic rigor are solely my own.

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Plate 7 *Arum italicum italicum*

Plate 8 *Dracunculus vulgaris*

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
CJ	*Classical Journal*
CMG	*Corpus Medicorum Graecorum.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1908-.
CML	*Corpus Medicorum Latinorum.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1915-.
CPh	*Classical Philology*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CW	*Classical World*
DS	Daremberg, C. V., and E. Saglio, eds. *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines.* 5 Vols. Paris: Hachette, 1877-1919. Reprint. Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt, 1969.
ERE	James Hastings, ed. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.* New York: Scribner, 1951.
GR	*Greece and Rome*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JP	*Journal of Philology*
LS	C.T. Lewis and C. Short. *A Latin Dictionary.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879.
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon.* Ninth Edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
OLD	P.G.W. Glare. *Oxford Latin Dictionary.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.
Ph	*Philologus*
RE	Pauly A., and G. Wissowa, Eds. *Real-Encyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft.* Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1894-1980.
RM	*Rheinisches Museum*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Society*
TLG	*Thesaurus Linguae Graecae.* Paris: 1831-1865. Reprint. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1954.
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.* Leipzig: Teubner, 1900-.
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

INTRODUCTION

Despite the broad range of sexual practices portrayed in ancient literature, specific reference to male sexual dysfunction appears in relatively few ancient literary texts. In the ancient world, the personal and social anxieties generated by male sexual failure are not unlike those in the modern world, and in some cases the remedies undertaken for the condition exhibit close parallels.[1] In the ancient world, however, the perceptions of impotence and the problems associated with it were compounded by the long-standing acceptance of the cultural predominance of the male in Greco-Roman society. Consequently, modern attempts to investigate male sexual dysfunction and its representations in and relationship to ancient literature are frequently frustrated much in the same way as have been investigations of women in these same societies.[2] Thus when moderns examine the cultural landscape of the classical world through the surveyor's level of literature, the field of view is limited not only by the incomplete state of the textual record but also by the point of view from which that landscape was originally scanned and interpretively reproduced. Similarly, while it is true that any comprehensive treatment of cultural attitudes is restricted by the existence and comprehensiveness of evidence from all sources, in the nature of classical society itself an overwhelmingly male bias characterizes that evidence, and this record has been re-examined in a number of recent and influential studies.[3]

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[1] These correspondences are discussed in Chapter Two.

[2] See, for example, the introductory remarks by the editor in *Feminist Theory and the Classics*, ed. Nancy S. Rabinowitz and Amy Richlin (New York: Routledge, 1993), 8-11.

[3] Fortunately, in recent years research into the social and cultural issues of the Greco-Roman world has opened up a much wider scope for investigation, and some works have exerted a good deal of influence on the way I approach this subject matter. For example, see Anne Carson, "Putting Her in Her Place: Woman, Dirt, and Desire," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David M. Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma Zeitlin (Princeton: University Press, 1990), 135-169 for a comprehensive overview of the dangers of the unrestricted woman in the predominantly male-generated literature. On a larger cultural scale fear of women becomes a justification for the deep-seated and strictly male-centered social structure of classical Athens according to Eva Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985), 1-5. For the ways in which the sexuality of both genders finds representation in ancient art and how this reflects a broad spectrum of personal, cultural, and social viewpoints, see also the collected essays in Natalie B. Kampen, ed., *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Regarding human sexuality, moreover, this prejudice in favor of the male point of view is especially prominent, as Dover has pointed out.[4] On the other hand, a more recent investigation of the *Deipnosophistae* by Madeleine Henry critiques not only the male-oriented attitudes that characterize the ancient work but also current insensitivities; indeed, Henry levels the criticism of attitudinal imbalance both against Athenaeus's modern translator and even against "one of the most provocative and influential recent historians of Western thought."[5] According to Henry there is a "seamless sameness" of the attitude between the Athenian symposiasts and the much older literary material that they cite. In fact, male sexuality predominates throughout the larger cultural context of surviving literary, artistic, and archaeological artifacts from both the Greek and the Roman social landscape. The result is that current theoretical approaches to investigating ancient sexuality have only recently succeeded in overcoming the privileged male viewpoint, and they have accomplished this primarily through the kind of scholarship that reexamines and reinvents the bases for analyses and which directly addresses the disparity of attitude.[6]

Seen from this restricted viewpoint, the ancient male is portrayed as culturally dominant, socially aggressive, emotionally removed, and unrelentingly virile. To cite just one example from ancient material culture, the explicit scenes on Attic vases portraying the violent

[4] K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 2: "All Greek art, literature and archival material, with the exception of a little poetry surviving only in fragments and citations, was the work of males, and the evidence bearing upon female sexuality of any kind is exiguous..." Sappho, Corinna, and Sulpicia immediately come to mind as examples of the exception to the rule. The same, of course, is true for the attitudes toward sexuality in classical culture in general. For an appealing approach to the concept of sexuality ancient and modern, and for a discussion of the inherent problems in treating the topic in an unprejuduced way, see Halperin, Winkler, Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 5-7. The most striking example of the male bias in the literature of sexuality, that of pornographic handbooks written in a female authorial voice, is evidence that even this literature was produced by men for consumption by men. The genre is discussed in detail by Holt N. Parker, "Love's Body Anatomized: The Ancient Erotic Handbooks and the Rhetoric of Sexuality," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, ed. Amy Richlin (New York: Oxford, 1992), 90-111.

[5] Madeleine M. Henry, "The Edible Woman: Athenaeus's Concept of the Pornographic," in Richlin, *Pornography*, 250-268, especially 250-252. For example, the translator Gulick's apology for the mention of prostitutes in Athenaeus is criticized as an example of his approach while Foucault comes in for harsher criticism for considering "an investigation of female sexuality irrelevant to his project." Cf. Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus*, rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), xiv-xvi.

[6] For a fuller appreciation of the problem, see the introductory remarks of the editor in Richlin, *Pornography*, xii-xiv and the works referenced there. Cf. also the further discussion of appropriate critical orientation in Richlin's "Reading Ovid's

and impersonal nature of male sexuality were intended to impart to young symposiasts a clear and reaffirming sense of their sexual superiority; and in a similar fashion a concomitant objectification and its resultant degradation of female characters in the performance of Old Comedy serve as routine additions to that genre's raucous sexual slapstick.[7] In Latin literature, too, male sexual aggression finds its expression in the obscenity, aggression, and sexual humor typical of satire, of epigram, and of other forms of literary invective.[8] In these particular genres the warlike virility of the first person speaker and aggressor functions as his foremost attribute and weapon; the victims of his attack are women, boys, and men whose virility is open to question or who are openly pathic.[9]

Yet while the majority of representations of the male in ancient literature exemplify the assumptions of male social, cultural, and sexual superiority described above, exceptions do occur. For example, the characterization of women in several plays of Aristophanes bespeaks male fears about women in power and about their perceived threats to traditional masculine hegemony. In *Ecclesiazusae* women assume male dress and appearance, a prerequisite for power, to establish a *gynaikokratia* while the women characters of *Thesmophoriazusae,* segregated from the male population in their celebration of the rites of Demeter and Persephone, are themselves infiltrated by disguised men.[10] In *Lysistrata,* however, the stringently maintained social boundaries of the male and female are transgressed predominantly within the domestic sexual sphere. In contrast to the mutually exclusive positions of men and women in contemporary Athenian society, then, the play's female characters assert themselves within the realm of their own domestic and private world in order to control the larger public world of men's affairs and to appropriate public resources for domestic benefit.[11] The comic and parodic account

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Rapes," in Richlin, *Pornography,* 159-161 and her critical remarks (*Garden,* xxii-xxiv) on the deficiencies of the traditional, positivist classics community, of Focault, and of the New Historicism in their approaches to ancient gender issues.

[7] These points are discussed by Bella Zweig, "The Mute Nude Female Characters in Aristophanes' Plays," in Richlin, *Pornography,* 73-89, especially 83-85.

[8] These genres are the focus of Richlin's *Garden of Priapus.*

[9] Richlin, *Garden,* xvi. The invective poems of Catullus belong here, as do a number of the Horatian *Epodes,* some Juvenalian *Satirae,* and the mostly anonymous collection known as the *Carmina Priapea.* As Richlin ("Reading Ovid's Rapes") has deftly shown, the literary depiction of such sexual violence is not restricted to these genres.

[10] Lauren K. Taaffe, *Aristophanes and Women* (London: Routledge, 1993), 130-131 (on *Ecclesiazusae*) and 74-75 (on *Thesmophoriazusae*).

[11] Jeffrey Henderson, trans., *Aristophanes' Lysistrata* (Newburyport, Massachusetts: Focus, 1988), 9. Contrast, however, the theatrically oriented view (emphasizing the

of the taunting of a lovesick husband by a sexually aggressively wife (841-958), moreover, while cast in the traditional mode of feminine seduction, nevertheless validates the power of the female over the male in a manner clearly at odds with the concept of social or political power based on virility.[12] Indeed, taken as a whole, these three works, like several other Aristophanic productions, suggest that the representational blending of otherwise rigidly established gender roles signals a real reaction to the stereotypical dominance of the masculine ideal.[13]

The depiction of women characters in Aristophanic comedy, especially those of *Lysistrata,* derives from two other literary and artistic paradigms of female-dominated societies: the Lemnian women and the Amazons.[14] Both of these mythical groups lived for the most part apart from the company of men, and both were viewed as a threat both to established male cultural and sexual superiority and to traditionally constructed Athenian societal ideals. The former, punished by Aphrodite with a repulsive odor which consequently drove away their husbands, murdered all the men on the island of Lemnos for their infidelity with Thracian slavewomen, an act deemed especially criminal in an androcentric culture.[15] Often depicted in sculpture and painting and extensively documented in literature, the Amazons provide the most illustrative and long-lived paradigm of socio-political alternatives to the masculine model.[16]

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comic tensions of having male actors playing female characters) offered by Taaffe (*Aristophanes and Women,* 51): "In fact, while the entire plot rests on the supposed absence of men, masculinity proves to be omnipresent, overshadowing any apparent femininity."

[12] Taaffe, *Aristophanes and Women,* 67-69 and 171 nn. 39 and 40.

[13] Aristophanes' contemporaries Plato and Euripides also understood and advanced the androgynous ideal despite the tendency of Greek culture to suppress it in favor of the more familiar masculine orientation. See Ernest J. Ament, "Aspects of Androgyny in Classical Greece," in *Woman's Power, Man's Game: Essays on Classical Antiquity in Honor of Joy R. King,* ed. Mary DeForest (Wauconda, Il: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1993), 1-31.

[14] Taaffe, *Aristophanes and Women,* 53-54. Page duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons: Women and the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being* (Ann Arbor: University of Michican Press, 1982), 120-121.

[15] The despised status of the Lemnian women is emphasized by the chorus of Aeschylus's *Libation Bearers* (631-634). See Keuls, *Phallus,* 338 and now especially Josine H. Blok, *The Early Amazons: Modern and Ancient Perspectives on a Persistent Myth* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 108 n. 208 for references and additional background information. The ritual significance of the actions of the Lemnian women for the social dislocations depicted in the play are treated extensively by A. M. Bowie, *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge: University Press: 1993), 186-195.

[16] The Amazons represent both a gender-related and ethnic alternative to Greek society and culture. See Blok, *Early Amazons,* 83-89; duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons,* 32-42, 66-71; and Keuls, *Phallus,* 321-328 (Ch. 13).

Examples of inversion such as these are transitory expressions at best, however. For example, the prevailing Athenian conceptualization reasserts male superiority by depicting the defeat of the female warriors in a number of military expeditions against the Amazons and emphasizes the role of Greek heroes such as Achilles, Theseus, and Heracles in reaffirming the predominant position of the individual male and of masculine society at large.[17] The first two of these, it should also be noted, assert themselves sexually in their relationship with Amazons, although the confrontation of Achilles and Penthesileia is predicated more on the heroic ideal than on *eros*.[18] In the case of Heracles, moreover, the seizure of the girdle of the Amazon Hippolyte has been interpreted as a figurative violation of Amazon culture itself, a fitting task for the greatest hero of Greece.[19] Yet, in terms of the traditional masculine role, the heroes and their actions exemplify a relatively simple paradigm; and while it is true that epic and later conceptions of the Amazons embraced an ambiguity about their masculine and feminine nature,[20] their defeat or their sexual violation by overtly masculine heroes establishes the primacy of a powerful masculinity by stripping away the trappings of the warrior and thereby restoring to the Amazons a passive femininity.[21]

Still, closer scrutiny of the figure of Heracles in particular does reveal another facet of the representation of gender; for even as the physical force and excessive sexuality of Greece's most famous hero make him the premier example of such a powerful masculinity,[22] images of a submissive Heracles are well documented and form an integral part of the hero's life. An examination of Heracles' relationship with one female figure in particular, the Lydian queen Omphale, reveals the complicated matrix of tensions woven into the ancient conception of the masculine and the feminine and illuminates more precisely the problems associated with determining the

[17] Keuls, *Phallus*, 44-47.

[18] Achilles' sexual attraction to Penthesileia formed part of the post-Homeric epic tradition: Blok, *Early Amazons*, 195-210. Cf., however, 233-236 and 250-251. The account of the rape of Antiope by Theseus can be seen as an emphasis upon the sexuality of the Amazons instead of their warrior status, a concern that fifth century Athenian political sensibilities reworked into a more acceptable mythological model for their national hero. See also Blok, *Early Amazons*, 437 and 441-442.

[19] duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, 40. For a contrary view, see the extended discussion in Blok, *Early Amazons*, 424-429 with references.

[20] Blok, *Early Amazons*, 174, 277-278, 427.

[21] See, for example, ibid., 287 and 426.

[22] Nicole Loraux, *The Experiences of Tiresias* (Princeton: University Press, 1995), 119. An earlier version of this material on Heracles appears as "Herakles: The Super-Male and the Feminine," in Halperin, Winkler, Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 21-52.

social and cultural status accorded virility.[23] Thus, at the same time that Heracles is represented as the aggressive victor in his campaigns against the Amazons and as the legendary and sexual conqueror of a multitude of women's bodies, his servitude to a barbarian queen also typifies a radical cultural inversion. On one hand, the polar opposition of his militant masculinity and his subservience to the feminine principle exemplifies the ambivalent character of both dominant and submissive roles; on the other, in adopting the womanly robes symbolic of a ritual androgyny intended to purify him and cure him of the disease resulting from his murder of Iphitus, Heracles actually benefits from his gender-inverting servitude.[24] In certain Roman depictions, moreover, the literary and artistic representation of the hero and the queen in the company of the androgynous god Bacchus underscores both the instability of gender roles and their wider connections in a tradition of conceptual and even ritual associations.[25] And while ancient writers often tended to misunderstand the ritual nature of Heracles' transvestism and regarded it merely as a mark of humiliation, the essential picture of a servile, compliant Heracles does attest to the existence of a concept of an inherent social and cultural femininity as the antithesis of aggressive and self-assertive male impulses.[26]

In contrast to the way that the subservience of Heracles to a woman clearly compromises his masculinity in the social and cultural sphere, the sexual aspects of Heracles' femininity are more elusive. The hero's great physical suffering, especially in his final days as the victim of the deadly cloak given him by Deianira, represents a passive endurance of pain corresponding to a feminine experiencing of the body, particularly during childbirth; and, moreover, the murder of his sons is a woman's crime, the suffering for which the hero himself sees as equivalent to that endured by mothers who have killed their own infants.[27] In fact, it is only when the tragic hero is repre-

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[23] Heracles' servitude to Omphale is reported by Lichas in Sophocles' *Trachiniae* 248-257. Ovid's portrayal of him through the eyes of Deianira (*Heroides* 9.5-6, 11-12) evokes similar images of submission, and the feminine aspects of his servitude form the major part of that same Ovidian work. Further references in Loraux, *Experiences,* 120 n. 22. Omphale's non-Greek status is also significant in that women in barbarian lands were thought to be especially powerful and dangerous. See Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 202-203.

[24] Ament, "Aspects of Androgyny," 16-18.

[25] Natalie Kampen, "Omphale and the Instability of Gender," in Kampen, *Sexuality,* 242-243 and 238, fig. 99.

[26] For the modern proponents of this approach, see Loraux, *Experiences,* 127-128 with nn. 63-65.

[27] Loraux, *Experiences,* 39-41 and 121-122 with n. 32. On the other hand, the sheer number of "masculine" tasks performed by Heracles offsets any feminine in-

sented in a helpless and submissive state, as Heracles is in his death throes, that the feminine and corporeal aspects of existence become associated with the male.[28] Similarly, the hero's experiencing of a woman's life can be identified with those elements of dress and behavior strongly suggestive of a sexual rather than simply cultural inversion.[29] Yet despite these aspects, the feminization of the submissive or unmasculine male exemplified by Heracles' servitude and suffering ultimately limits itself only to its social and cultural function;[30] his relationship to a feminine role lacks any real sexual element.

The general depiction of the ordinary male deemed less than virile, on the other hand, affords no corresponding representations of self-assertion and no corresponding positive characterizations to countervail the overall negative aspects of the condition. Moreover, according to the ancient discipline of physiognomics, which "seeks to detect from individuals' exterior features their character, disposition, or destiny,"[31] unmanliness could be detected outright in several ways including speech, actions, and dress.[32] Importantly, in the literature of personal invective and abuse, the domain of aggressive masculinity where accusations against male effeminacy abound, it is the sexual identity of the victims of verbal attack that is clearly and specifically emphasized. Exemplary in this regard is Ionian iambic poetry,

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trusion into his character. See Peter Mason, "Third Person / Second Sex: Patterns of Sexual Asymmetry in the *Theogony* of Hesiodos," in *Sexual Assymetry: Studies in Ancient Society*, ed. Josine Blok and Peter Mason (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1987), 166.

[28] Froma I. Zeitlin, "Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama," in *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?* ed. John Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: University Press, 1990), 71-75. See now also Christopher A. Faraone, "Deianira's Mistake and the Demise of Heracles: Erotic Magic in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*" *Helios* 21.2 (1994), 125-126, who suggests that the use of erotic magic by Deianira (in the form of the poisoned robe) to control the hero resulted in his effeminized condition.

[29] This view is offset by the image of the phallic Hercules Victor in female dress which is most probably related to purificatory and salutatory ritual rather than to any facets of the hero's sexuality. See Ament, "Aspects of Androgyny," 17 and n. 52 and for the significance of the *peplos*, a woman's garment, Loraux, *Experiences*, 125-131. Cf. the story of Achilles on Scyros.

[30] In Sophocles' play, for example, Heracles' eventual death on Oeta had cultic and religious importance for an Athenian audience. See P. E. Easterling, *Sophocles: Trachiniae* (Cambridge: University Press, 1982), 8-11 and 16-18.

[31] Tamsyn Barton, *Power and Knowledge: Astrology, Physiognomics, and Medicine under the Roman Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 95.

[32] Note, for example, the description of the *molles* ("soft males") in the *Anonymi de physiognomonia liber* in *Scriptores Physiognomici Graeci et Latini*, ed. R. Foerster, vol. 2 (Leipzig: Teubner, 1893), 134-135. Along with having easily noticeable physical peculiarities, such males are said to behave in ways which include moving their bodies like women (*movent corpus ut mulieres*), stretching a tunic around their loins (*tunicam circum lumbos tendunt*), and regularly clasping the hands of others (*frequenter manus aliorum*

represented chiefly by the fragmentary remains of Archilochus, Hipponax, and Semonides, which incorporates savage personal invective and crude obscenity, often based on wordplay and parody, to verbally assault a victim.[33] Much of the politically motivated humor of Greek Old Comedy, moreover, derives from these Ionian models; and, as Henderson has shown, both genres are replete with sexually graphic vocabulary directed at the effeminate or passive male, specific terms for which were numerous and varied.[34] In the Roman tradition effeminate appearance and behavior were quite clearly defined, and these are condemned as the source of degradation, intellectual debasement and inactivity, and an attendant moral laxity.[35] The small talk of social circles, the crude humor of soldiers, and the politically charged harangues of the courtroom are marked by similar tendencies and by a common vocabulary attacking the passive male. Indeed, Richlin's survey of Ciceronian oratory makes it quite clear that the verbal and rhetorical abuse accusing one's enemies of effeminate appearance or behavior was an accepted (and frequent) technique in legal cases.[36] The great majority of this abuse functions as an incisive and taunting criticism directed at the sexual marginality of the intended target, with obscenely phrased accusations complementary to a complex of political or social invective.[37]

Nonetheless, attacks upon an individual's sexual vulnerabilities are often relegated to a supporting role in texts of a generally abusive nature. The same holds especially true for accusations of male sexual dysfunction, for within the generic limits of literary invective specific reference to male sexual dysfunction as a distinct category of sexual marginality is also restricted in function. In fact, this same

apprehendunt). In general see also H. Herter, "Effeminatus," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum,* ed. Theodor Klauser (Stuttgart: Hiersman, 1959), 4.620-50 and especially 630-642 on appearance, behavior, and dress.

[33] Jefferey Henderson, *The Maculate Muse,* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 17-19.

[34] See Henderson, *Maculate Muse,* 27-29 for the relationship of Old Comedy to the iambic tradition; for iambic terms of abuse for the unmasculine male, 22; and for similar terms in Old Comedy, 209-215, 219-220.

[35] See Richlin, *Garden,* 92-93, 220-226, 280-282, and 288-290. Specific Latin terms include *effeminatus, cinaedus, pathicus, mollis,* and the like. Cf. J. N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 189-190 and 228. A term like *delicatus,* with an essential meaning similar to such words, could also function in an acceptable sense depending on the context, as in Catullus *c.* 50; see T. P. Wiseman, *Catullus & His World: A Reappraisal* (Cambridge: University Press, 1985), 12-13. Examples from both the Elder and the Younger Senecas of the effects of effeminate behavior are found in Richlin, *Garden,* 3-5.

[36] Richlin, *Garden,* 96-104, especially 96-98.

[37] See Henderson, *Maculate Muse,* 53 and the discussion of general attitudes to adult male pathic homosexuality and effeminacy, 204-209. See also John J. Winkler, "Laying Down the Law," in *Constraints of Desire* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 45-70.

model of a limited and ancillary thematic role for impotence applies as well to the larger literary realm. Accordingly, despite the primary thematic function of impotence in a number of shorter works and despite its incorporation into several major works as a collateral thematic element, the failure of the male to perform sexually is the central focus of only two major works of Latin literature: Ovid *Amores* 3.7 and the *Satyrica* of Petronius.

Because of these limitations in the literary evidence, therefore, I would suggest that it is imperative to consider an alternative and more comprehensive approach, one similar to that adopted by contemporary classicists investigating the role and representation of women in Greco-Roman society.[38] Viewed from another perspective, then, pertinent information about male sexual dysfunction in antiquity becomes more readily available. Popular concerns about the causes and cures for impotence surface everywhere in a diverse body of texts, including literary, scientific, medical, and magical works, as well as in other evidence of a subliterary variety. Several examples of the wide range of evidence will suffice. As one example of a commonly held belief, Martial suggests that a lack of foreplay combined with a pressure to perform can cause impotence (*Ep.* 1.46):

> Cum dicis 'Propero, fac si facis,' Hedyle, languet
> protinus et cessat debilitata Venus.
> expectare iube: velocius ibo retentus.
> Hedyle, si properas, dic mihi, ne properem.

> Hedyle, when you say, "I'm rushed. Do it if you're going to,"
> My weakened equipment droops right away and stops.
> So tell me to hold on; I'll go faster if I'm held back.
> Hedyle, if you are in hurry, tell me not to hurry.

In other cases even celestial configurations play a role: the astrologer Julius Firmicus Maternus attributes the problem to one's birth constellation and the attendant influences of the planets. For example, the planet Jupiter has an adverse effect on sexual relations (*Mathesis* 3.3.7):

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[38] An overview of the need for and development of such new approaches appears in Judith P. Hallett, "Feminist Theory, Historical Periods, Literary Canons, and the Study of Greco-Roman Antiquity," in Rabinowitz and Richlin, *Feminist Theory*, 44-72. Note especially her remarks on 52-53: "The paucity of evidence which remains from Greco-Roman antiquity in general, and the paucity of ancient Greco-Roman evidence which pertains to women in particular, have made it especially necessary for those of us interested in recovering women's lived reality and even women's cultural image in Greece and Rome to engage in interdisciplinary and ingenious research efforts. We feminist classicists must rely on a wide range of ancient sources in addition to literary texts (such as inscriptions, papyri, coins, and vase paintings), and adopt sensitive and imaginative approaches to synthesizing and analyzing these sources."

> Erit autem circa feminarum coitus tardior et <a> filiorum adfectibus separatus.
>
> In sexual intercourse with women, however, he will be rather slow and separated from the affection of his sons.

Venus and Saturn are also responsible for impotence when they interact (*Mathesis* 6.31.46):

> Si Venus in vespertino ortu collocata in occasu sit...et Venere sic posita Saturnus in MC. sit parte constitutus, viros ad Venerem languidos faciet.
>
> If Venus at its evening rising should be situated in the west...and if, with Venus thus placed, Saturn should be established in mid-heaven, it will make men powerless in sex.[39]

In a non-literary context, a wish for sexual difficulty appears on a lead tablet from Boeotia (85 A Audollent) with which a rival suitor curses a couple with impotence:

> Ζωίλος ἀδύνατος Ἄνθειραν Βαίν[ε]μεν κὴ Ἄνθειρα
> Ζωί[λον...]
>
> May Zoilos be unable to mount Antheira and Antheira...
> Zoilos...[40]

Such evidence points to a basic and widespread anxiety about male sexual inadequacy and reflects the tensions between the emphasis on virility in the larger cultural context and the popular belief that impotence was an affliction whose causes were either unknown or were ascribed to poorly understood forces both natural and supernatural. More importantly, the cures for impotence, as numerous and varied as they were, served as the means by which the impotent male not only might regain his physical prowess but also might re-integrate himself into the androcentric culture of which he was by birth a part.

In identifying substances and activities that were considered remedies for impotence, the efforts of one respected researcher have been of great importance. Over fifty years ago Theodor Hopfner carefully enumerated the ancient cures for impotence as part of a larger treat-

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[39] The same collocation also causes women to become uninterested in sex: *feminas ...frigidas faciet semper ad coitum* ("It will make women cold toward intercourse always"). For the astrological bases of effeminacy in males, see Tamsyn Barton, *Ancient Astrology* (London: Routledge, 1994), 163-165.

[40] I have taken Βαίν[ε]μεν as a form of βινεῖν, following John Gager, ed., *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 88. For another interpretation see Christopher Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," in *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, ed. Christopher A. Faraone and Dirk Obbink (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 13.

ment of male sexual dysfunction in an encyclopedic but ultimately unimaginative and relatively inconsistent way.[41] Yet although Hopfner's comprehensive examination itself is flawed in its limited treatment of the multitude of individual substances, and while it actually disguises its graphic subject matter under a shell of physiology, much of the material so carefully collected does prove useful for purposes of the present study.[42] For instance, since Hopfner did not restrict his efforts only to literary texts,[43] his treatment of dietary and medical considerations conducive to the improvement of male sexual performance offers a wealth of information about the substances ingested or applied to the body in an effort to cure impotence. Similarly, the substances derived from animal, vegetable, and mineral sources and used as dietary, medical, or magical means to effect a revival of sexual prowess are recorded in an organized and convenient fashion, and this arrangement affords a readily available mine of raw information from which further investigations may profitably proceed. But as valuable and inclusive a treatment as Hopfner's is, such a purely enumerative account of remedies for male sexual dysfunction ultimately accomplishes little beyond a mere collection of references supplemented only occasionally by a spare and standard commentary. In such compilations and especially in modern commentaries on ancient authors in general, any discussion of embedded cultural attitudes and any appreciation of the literary representation of the many and varied natural sources for impotence remedies cannot possibly encompass or analyze the sheer amount of information available; nor can they realistically evaluate the many sources from which such information is drawn.

This absence of cultural investigation, moreover, is not limited only to the individual substances as they are encountered in texts, for a more extensive network of perceived associations and connections reaches well beyond a sudden and fleeting contact with these fre-

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[41] Theodore Hopfner, *Das Sexualleben der Griechen und Römer* (Prague: Calve, 1938; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1975), 255-315. In his attempt to cover every aspect of the subject, Hopfner includes a wide variety of "treatments" many of which are not specifically aimed at impotence. The section on alcohol (295-304) seems particularly diffuse and directionless.

[42] See Halperin, Winkler, Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 12. Hopfner's approach "subordinated both literary and social structures to the impersonal sciences, reducing culturally relative notions of gender to the absolute terms of 'secondary sexual characteristics'"; and by establishing physiology as "a universally valid set of truths," he sought to determine the entire range of knowledge about sexual matters in the Greco-Roman world.

[43] Hopfner (*Sexualleben*, v-ix) is especially critical of previous works whose emphasis was primarily literary and which neglected the full range of evidence from other sources.

quently exotic materials. For the most part unacknowledged by modern scholarship, this network, like the various individual elements themselves, has neither been adequately examined nor systematically analyzed. The result for both the reader and the researcher alike is a limited and half-formed picture of the ways the ancients viewed their relationship with specific natural substances. The aim of the present work, then, is to investigate one particular facet of these interrelations between the ancients and their natural world and to demonstrate how an informed understanding of their presence in literary texts can significantly contribute to their proper interpretation as cultural artifacts.

To examine the entire range of impotence remedies attested in ancient sources and then to uncover and interpret their perceived associations would be a formidable task indeed. One major obstacle to such an endeavor is that many substances thought to cure impotence exhibit few, if any, associative relationships. They stand apart from one another in terms of how they were perceived by those who procured them, and the rationale behind the popular belief in their curative powers defies easy explanation.[44] So while Hopfner's encyclopedic and scientifically structured treatment succeeds at achieving a comprehensiveness by drawing material from the whole of Mediterranean culture of well over a millennium, my approach focuses more sharply on one particular network of associations in the ancient discourse on impotence. In fact, I propose to outline and explicate a cultural phenomenon that has not been previously noticed or examined by current scholarship: the existence of an interdependent network of physical and sympathetic connections among certain impotence cures spanning the vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms. In the present investigation, moreover, I seek to remedy earlier deficiencies in scholarship by examining a number of impotence cures whose relationship to the male sex organ is based upon visual and magical associations[45] and whose use was recommended by contemporary medical and dietary regimens.[46]

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[44] For example, certain fish reputed to be sexually stimulative like the βατίς (*Kyranides* 4.5.9) and the κωβιός (Aëtius *Libri medicinales* 2.141) either do not share a perceptual association or that perceptual association is so elusive as to be yet undiscerned.

[45] In this investigation I will use the adjective "magical" in its widest possible sense, inclusive of variously distinguished sub-categories like the (English) terms "witchcraft," "enchantment," and the like. For a recent treatment of the actual social, cultural, and philological problems of attempting a precise definition of magic and the ensuing implications for ancient magical papyri, see Jonathan Z. Smith, "Trading Places," in *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power*, ed. Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), 13-27.

[46] An excellent treatment of similar material but in a much different context is

The interdependent network of substance and suggestion that I will examine is necessarily circumscribed, being limited to only those elements that share characteristics of original appearance, innate composition, or curative reactions if externally applied or ingested. In the popular mentality these all were perceptually interrelated with one another and with the male organ. Furthermore, this essential connection between certain plants, animals, and stones and their close association with male sexuality ultimately originates in a belief in the actual exchange of magical influences in the physical world.[47]

From the many different individual strands of such perceptions, three associations appeared to the ancient mind as naturally intertwined, and these associations form the basis for my investigation. One of these is the relationship perceived to exist between the male sex organ stimulated by the heat of passion and serpents with their various and widespread associations with sexuality. As a corollary to this particular association, popular perception held as well that the poison produced by a venomous serpent, long considered a substance of deadening coldness, could prompt a deficiency in male sexual function. Magical elements are certainly at play here; but there is more than just a direct conceptual connection between these two elements of the association, and it is only through a careful consideration of the subtle and indirect linking of other associations that a picture of an entire elaborate network can be presented. For example, the second relationship I examine is less direct yet no less important, for important perceived connections exist among a number of wild and cultivated plants notable for their visual similarities to both serpents and to the phallus. These extended associations become even more evident when the ancient ideas of the relationships between serpents and serpent-like plants come under scrutiny. Finally, the third association I investigate is that which extends to stones and

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Carl Ruck's "Euripides' Mother: Vegetables and the Phallos in Aristophanes," *Arion* 2 (1975), 13-57.

[47] Here we should acknowledge and subscribe to David J. Hufford's stipulative definition of "belief" taken from *Belief Word Tools*, Unpublished draft, dated September 14, 1990, 12 (capitals original): "BELIEF is the quality of being held to be certain. This implicitly refers to propositions." Note how this definition stands in contrast to the customary definition: "A BELIEF is a proposition considered true by someone(s). 2. Such a proposition or the quality of truth held about it, taken to be less than fully JUSTIFIED (therefore, not absolutely certain); i.e., it *may* be true but cannot be said to be KNOWN to be true." See now also David J. Hufford, "The Experience-Centered Analysis of Belief Stories," in *Fields of Folklore: Essays in Honor of Kenneth S. Goldstein*, ed. Roger Abrahams (Bloomington: Trickster Press, 1995), 55-56. Other definitions needed for purposes of this investigation are treated as relevant terms are encountered.

carved amulets used prophylactically or curatively for impotence. In fact, several kinds of stones were reputed to have an effect on human sexuality and were used to treat (or even cause) male sexual dysfunction, and the same ancient perceptions of serpentine influence described above have relevance in this sphere as well.

Every facet of this extended interrelationship, however subtly suggested or perceived, affected the popular reactions to the substances involved, either individually or in combination. These reactions in turn often dictated the way the substances were used since there existed in the population at large a knowledge of a variety of remedies for medical problems, bolstered by "a tradition of self-help" in the absence of qualified medical practitioners.[48] Such a familiarity with substances or objects considered efficacious for curing impotence, both those naturally occurring and those altered by humans, contributed to their accessibility. Hence the means by which impotence, like other afflictions, might be remedied was readily available through collection, preparation, or manufacture by individuals directly; cures might also be obtained through the intercession of the marketplace.[49] Of course, the procurement of a remedy for any kind

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[48] See Vivian Nutton, "Healers in the Medical Market Place: Towards a Social History of Greco-Roman Medicine," in *Medicine in Society: Historical Essays,* ed. Andrew Wear (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17. While he concedes that such traditional knowledge "appears infrequently in the literary sources," Nutton does point to a number of extant texts from both the *Hippocratic Corpus* and later collections as evidence for its existence. Such works are directed specifically to lay practitioners, and handbooks on simples and related magical texts are evidence for this kind of "do-it-yourself" mentality.

[49] For both aspects see Alfred Schmidt, *Drogen und Drogenhandel im Altertum* (Leipzig: Barth, 1924; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1979), especially chaps. 9 and 10 ("Kleinhandel"); for the "rootcutters" see chap. 8 and references. The extent of the commercial network that supplied a wide array of healing herbs and drugs is outlined by Vivian Nutton, "The Drug Trade in Antiquity," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 78 (February 1985), 138-145. Nutton describes several different cultural and economic levels of the drug trade, ranging from the dubious commercial endeavors of "backwoodsmen, traveling salesmen, and snake charmers" (139) to the practical use of simples by local herbalists, rootcutters, and doctors and finally to the importation of exotic products by international traders. A modern parallel can be seen in the collection from the North American woodlands of the roots of native ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), widely regarded as a stress-relieving and libido-enhancing herb. Professional collectors often save an amount of the product for personal use and sell the roots either in informal settings among familiars or in more commercially structured arrangements for domestic consumption and even for export. Because the plant is a protected species in some regions, there has also grown up a thriving black market in illegally harvested roots. See now Mark Blumenthal, "Ginseng Takes Root in *Wall Street Journal,*" *HerbalGram* 28.1 (1993), 10 and "N.Y. Officials Seize 11 Pounds of Illegally Harvested Ginseng," *Syracuse Post-Standard,* September 9, 1996, sec. A, 10.

of malady empowers its user; but in the case of impotence, obtaining a cure functions as an especially important means to the restoration of personal wholeness not only through the revival of physical virility but also through the reestablishment of self-image on an interpersonal level and the reintegration of the afflicted into society.[50]

As I have suggested above, in the case of the perceived network under consideration, remedy and a resultant empowerment derive from properties thought to be inherent in specific substances themselves. The network itself, moreover, becomes a model for the way in which such an empowerment was visualized and felt. For instance, the most basic of its associations was rooted in the visual analog of the part of the body, the male reproductive organ, which was affected by whatever malign influences brought about impotence. At this stage a plant's physical resemblance to the penis and, to a lesser degree, human tactile familiarity with plant structure both operate in the most direct manner to enforce this basic identification. Another aspect of the tactile analogy, moreover, originates in the stimulative properties of plant-derived substances that caused a sensation of warming when applied or ingested. This sensation approximates the physiological effects of sexual arousal upon the body in general and on the genitals in particular.[51] When the association of male sexuality with particular animals is investigated, a visual similarity often plays a part; but this similarity is also complemented by specific behavioral factors exhibited by the organism. In the case of the typical reptilian features possessed by serpents, the movements of the animal itself contribute to sexual association and analogy. In addition, substances derived from the serpent in the form of its poisonous venom were thought to cause those deadening effects that chill the living warmth necessary for the operation of the body.

The most sophisticated connection, however, between the sexual activity of the male and a substance thought to promote it resides in the power ascribed to certain varieties of stones used either in their natural state or altered in the form of amulets. In the case of the former the perceived effectiveness of the stone originates in the sub-

[50] The role of medicine, or any curative procedure for that matter, has an important social function in balancing the material needs of the healing process with the human difficulties encountered in illness. See Lawrence E. Sullivan, ed., *Healing and Restoring: Health and Medicine in the World's Religious Traditions* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 3.

[51] The increases in heart rate, blood pressure, and the so-called "sex flush" during male sexual arousal would naturally lead to such an association. See James Smolev, "Male Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology," in *Men's Reproductive Health,* ed. Janice M. Swanson and Katherine A. Forrest (New York: Springer, 1984), 38 for a description of the male sexual response cycle.

stance of which it is composed much in the same way that substances from both plants and animals were considered sexually stimulative. The substance of such stones, moreover, was often visually linked to sources that added to its power. Yet, in the case of stones used as amulets, a host of magically sympathetic properties are the chief means by which they were deemed effective. Such sympathetic influences differ significantly in that they are not bound to a substance alone; their power emanates only from the stone itself as a source. In fact, once conceptually separated from their basis in the physical world, these sympathetic powers can be directed against malign influence in order to cure impotence or can even be used to cause impotence. This control of one of the strongest human drives is perhaps the clearest evidence of the ability of these remedies to empower their users.

The rediscovery of these relationships in the literary and subliterary record is fraught with difficulty and requires a speculative approach not unlike that applied to more strictly scientific disciplines. Like many other poorly understood associations once made by humans about the natural world, the more subtle and intricate associations among substances used as impotence cures lie, strata-like, under and between multiple layers of suggestion and meaning. They reveal themselves scattered about in texts like the fossiliferous beds of sedimentary rock, protruding randomly through the surface and only partially exposed to view. Consequently, the investigator must approach this arrangement of image, suggestion, metaphor, and meaning like a palaeontologist who regularly "walks out" ancient geologic formations in the present landscape to better understand their past structural relationships. Once these structural relationships are established, closer connections can be seen; and only then may the putative reconstruction of long dead environment begin. The same procedure holds true for rediscovering the network of associations which forms the subject of the present investigation, and every available bit of evidence, carried to the furthest imagistic limits, serves, like index fossils in a geologic sequence, to enhance the overall picture. But mere description of the various interrelated elements contributes only partially to an overall view of the cultural landscape. Once the existence of a network of associations is established, it is necessary to look deeper to understand its significance to the ancients. In doing so I demonstrate how an awareness of these associations can sharpen the understanding of the workings of the ancient mind and how it can inform the reading of literary texts whose mention of impotence reflects popular attitudes and incorporates popular discourse about the affliction.

In addition to such popular associations, moreover, it is also possible to draw conclusions about how the appearance of male erectile deficiency in literary contexts reflects the tensions between cultural impulses that favor a powerful virility and the weakness of males afflicted with impotence. In one case, Catullus *c.* 67, the unhappy results of a groom's sexual dysfunction are recounted in a decidedly gossipy manner complete with a humble vegetable metaphor and vivid verbal imagery,[52] emphasizing the powerlessness of the afflicted young man. In another, Horace's *Epode* 3, familiar allusions to magical practice and poisoning appear along with an undercurrent of sexual wordplay which derives from the network of associations. Finally, in Ovid *Amores* 3.7 an unsuccessful tryst is the setting for a lengthier account of sexual failure, including a humorous analysis of the situation by the afflicted party and replete with clear references to the associative imagery of nature and magic underlying contemporary perceptions of impotence.

But without a doubt the text that is most appropriate for representations of impotence and the anxieties prompted about it in ancient popular culture is the *Satyrica* of Petronius. In addition, thematic considerations appear here most consistently where the main character and narrator, Encolpius, is unable to perform sexually and where he relies on a variety of remedies for his condition. These numerous physical and behavioral cures, moreover, represent a framework of perceptual reality similar to and, in some cases based upon, the network of associations discussed earlier. Throughout the fragmentary text, however, Encolpius's efforts to regain his virility remain unsuccessful. Yet through his first person narrative and frequent dialogic exchanges with the other characters he is able to voice his frustration and to reflect upon his condition. In doing so he frees himself from the stigma of his sexual inadequacy until he is eventually cured,[53] and this personal voice then becomes the means by which the humiliation and agony of the sexually dysfunctional male enables his concerns about his condition to be resolved. Thus, through the actual narrative process itself the very parodic nature of the *Satyrica* is incorporated into a critique of the traditional concepts of ritual and magical practice which are taken for granted in other literary representations of male sexual dysfunction.

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[52] For the metaphor see Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 26.

[53] At *Sat.* 140.12-13 Encolpius attributes his recovery to Mercury whose associations with the phallus were well known, on which see Gian Biagio Conte, *The Hidden Author*, trans. Elaine Fantham (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 97-100.

CHAPTER ONE

SURVEYING THE LANDSCAPE

In this chapter I discuss evidence for the ancient literary representation of male sexuality, particularly of male sexual dysfunction, and the evidence for folk traditions and belief about impotence.[1] In addition to surveying the literary artifacts as evidence *per se,* I also treat the relative acceptability and reliability of scientific and subliterary sources for analyzing attitudes toward impotence and for providing information on cures. Last, I discuss the continuity and persistence of popular belief in generically dissimilar texts representative of widely separated periods.

Let me begin by suggesting that the discourse about male sexual activity was both pervasive and long-lived in the classical world. The available evidence exists in literary texts of both distinguished and lowly genre; in scientific, medical, and philosophical works of various merit; and in other documents such as collections of magic procedures and curse tablets. While care must be taken to avoid undocumented generalizations and to be especially aware of regional or cultural peculiarities, taken in its widest compass this evidence suggests a general commonality of perception about sexual matters in cosmopolitan Greco-Roman culture.[2] Discernible in the evidence as well is a common level of popular understanding about sexuality. My approach to analyzing this evidence is simply to establish the location of pertinent information within the different types of written sources. For example, many subliterary texts offer information unrecoverable from works of more distinguished generic pedigree, yet they provide valuable insight into the underlying cultural bases for more elevated literary expression.

The first consideration, then, is the exact nature of the discourse. For instance, Dover has pointed out that while the actual treatment

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[1] By literary representation I mean simply the various places across the entire spectrum of the written record where the subject of male sexuality appears, especially but not exclusively works of literature proper. Folk tradition and folk belief I consider as a body of shared knowledge, more or less organized yet frequently unrecorded, and common to a culture or group.

[2] The Roman attitude toward male bisexuality, for example, was considerably different from that of the Greek, at least prior to the influence of Hellenization. See Eva Cantarella, *Bisexuality in the Ancient World,* trans. Cormac O' Cuilleanáin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 217-219.

of sexual matters in literature was not avoided, there did exist a certain reluctance about portraying the specifics of sexual activity.[3] As might be expected, graphic depictions of sexual activity or an outright discussion of sexual issues are largely absent from epic and tragedy although such matters are suggested and understood.[4] On the other hand, lyric monody often incorporates expressions of intimacy revealing a distinct recognition of the physical manifestations of sexuality. These are often marked by comparisons and associations drawn from the natural world, and the vivid natural imagery of Sappho is especially noteworthy in its depiction of human passions.[5] Her description of an eager bridegroom, for instance, with its overtones of vibrantly sexual freshness typifies such associations (Fr.115):

> τίῳ σ', ὦ φίλε γάμβρε, κάλως εἰκάσδω;
> ὄρπακι βραδίνῳ σε μάλιστ' εἰκάσδω.
>
> To what will I well compare you, dear bridegroom?
> I'll rightly compare you to a slender sapling.

Similar poetic associations derived from the natural world frequently appear elsewhere in Greek lyric.[6] In prose, perhaps the best known discussion of sexuality is Plato's *Symposium,* where a philosophical treatment of the power of Eros and a discussion of pederasty are thematic.[7]

Genres of a humorous or abusive nature stand in contrast to this intellectually interpretive approach, and such works often portray a broad range of sexual activity in a decidedly graphic manner. Consequently, a clearer idea of the actual sexual practices and attitudes may come from the relatively coarse utterances of authors like

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[3] J. K. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 206 and n. 4. He points out how in less than a century the uninhibited character of Old Comedy had been replaced in New Comedy by a self-conscious awareness of the vulgarity of everyday speech.

[4] In Greek epic the Homeric account of the seduction of Zeus by Hera (*Il.* 14.153-351), with its careful account of Hera's wiles and couched in the form of a "sacred marriage" (*hieros gamos*), and the coarser description by Hesiod of the union of Gaea and Uranos (*Theogony* 176-177) serve as examples. Tragedy offers numerous instances as well.

[5] For sexual imagery and authorial awareness of female sexuality in Sapphic poetry, see John J. Winkler, "Double Consciousness in Sappho's Lyrics," in Winkler, *Constraints of Desire,* 162-187 and now also Lyn H. Wilson, *Sappho's Sweetbitter Songs* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 68-86.

[6] For further discussion of the relationship between human sexuality and the vegetable kingdom, see below Chapter Three.

[7] The latter aspect and the role of Diotima are treated extensively by David M. Halperin, "Why Is Diotima a Woman?" in Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality,* 257-308.

Archilochus and Hipponax.[8] A good deal of useful information also comes from Aristophanes, whose use of sexual themes reflects contemporary preferences, prejudices, and a tendency to go beyond societal guidelines.[9] The mime, literarily best represented by Herodas, constitutes a form of public entertainment frequently characterized by explicit sexuality and gross violence; contemporary Hellenistic and subsequent epigram often includes graphic language along with vivid sexual imagery and metaphor. In later centuries the Greek Romances depict an awareness of sexual activity marked primarily by monogamous and heterosexual arrangements, although each work differs in the ways which sexuality in general is presented.[10] For example, Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe* stands as a particularly good example for an examination of attitudes to sexuality in that the origin, function, and satisfaction of *eros* is explicated at both the personal and societal levels; indeed, such a thematic duality is an important feature of the Greek Romance in general.[11]

Latin literature presents a comparable range of approaches to sexual activity and to its personally and societally interactive aspects. Foremost are the depictions of emotional and social involvements of Catullus and the sophisticated and erotodidactic verse of Ovid.[12] While the obscene nature of the *Carmina Priapea* stands perhaps at the very boundary between literary expression and verbal impreca-

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[8] A good example for issues of male sexuality is found in Archilochus Pap. Colon. 7511; of impotence in particular, in Hipponax 78Dg and 95Dg. For the latter see below.

[9] See Henderson, *Maculate Muse,* 50-51 with reference to sexual activities and mutual concerns for pleasure. Old Comedy had a very close link with everyday realities; cf. Malcom Davies and Jeyaraney Kathirithamby, *Greek Insects* (Oxford: University Press, 1986), 12 who draw parallels between the treatment of everyday realities (in this case insects) and the essence of Old Comedy. Carnevalesque elements also contribute to Aristophanic Comedy's transcendence of the customary social and legal strictures, on which see Jean-Claude Carrière, *Carnaval et la politique: une introduction à la comedie grecque* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1979), 31-32.

[10] Graham Anderson, *Ancient Fiction: The Novel in the Greco-Roman World* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Noble, 1984), 106-121.

[11] For a discussion of the many facets of this particular work and how it incorporates them into a unified whole, see Froma I. Zeitlin, "The Poetics of *Eros*: Nature, Art, and Imitation in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*" in Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality,* 417-464. Her evaluation of the novel is conveniently summed up (419): "The result is a cultural document of special value that explores and exemplifies some influential ways in which Greek antiquity represents the nature and psychology of *erōsm* the sources of its power, the modes of its revelations, the obstacles as well as the paths to its physical and social fulfillment. More precisely, the novel weaves together the many different strands of images and ideas that had accumulated in the erotic repertory to delineate sexual identity, especially relations between the sexes."

[12] *Carmina* 6, 16, and 32 may serve as examples of the former; among the well known Ovidian examples are the *Amores, Ars Amatoria* and *Remedium Amoris.*

tion, both the vulgar tradition of streetwise Cynics and the verbal aggression of Lucilius do find a literary respectablility and an ethical fruition in the invective of Horace's *Epodes* and in the gentler observations of his *Sermones*.[13] In the Silver Age, the sharpness of the Cynic διατριβή resurfaces in Juvenalian satire, and in contemporary epigram the wryness and the critical insight of Martial frequently provide pointed social commentary about sexuality and echo sentiments similar to those of some poems in the *Greek Anthology*.[14]

In the portrayal of sexual activity generic considerations play an especially important role in Roman fiction, where the cultural attitudes depicted in Greek Romance resonate to some degree and where concerns about the intersection of sexuality with personal and societal issues afford insights into contemporary discourse about the diverse forms that human sexual behavior may assume.[15] In fact, the spectrum of sexual activity represented in the Roman Novel is quite broad to be sure; and compared to similar depictions in Greek Romance, sexual incidents are more frequent and more graphic. They also involve a wider range of participants in a variety of situations: young and old, male and female, and human and animal, with little of the strong preference for monogamous sexual arrangements found in their Greek counterparts.

The realism of the Roman Novel in representing the actualities of sexual practices, moreover, can be used to discover contemporary attitudes to sexuality. In fact, while one ought not argue that a literary representation can *definitively* demonstrate the normal experiences of its audience, it is not out of place to suggest that the appeal of the genre to a given audience answered to their cultural realities at some

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[13] The themes in the *Carmina Priapea* and their literary pedigree are extensively treated in Richlin, *Garden of Priapus*, 116-127. Horace mentions his debt to his forerunners in *Serm.* 1.4 while *Epodes* 8 and 12 in particular deal with topics of sexual coarseness; and *Epode* 3 has, as I illustrate, unrecognized sexual significance.

[14] Numerous examples of the discourse about sexuality surface in the short poems of the latter; of the former *Satires* 2 and 6 are specifically devoted to both personal and societal concerns of sexuality. A number of pieces from the *Greek Anthology* figure prominently in this investigation as well.

[15] The question of the generic structure of the *Satyrica* is complex. The discussion in Martin Smith, ed., *Petronius: Cena Trimalchionis* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1975), xv-xviii is perhaps the best recent treatment of the problem. See now also Conte, *The Hidden Author*, 140-170, who discusses the tensions between Menippean satire and the novel. For the portrayal of sexual reality, see John. P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), 98-106, who concentrates on literary considerations and devotes several pages to the question of realism and its limitations in the *Satyrica*. A similar overview of Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* appears in Carl C. Schlam, *The Metamorphoses of Apuleius* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 1-3. Cf. John J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 4-8.

level. Consequently, this resonance between culture and cultural artifact permits the identification of anxieties about certain expressions of sexuality, including those about impotence. As a result, in considering pertinent literary texts, I adopt a critical stance that combines a number of ways of looking at literature and society and one that can afford insights to this intersection of the real and the imaginative. Accordingly, the various "behavioral codes, logics, and motive forces controlling a whole society" may be discerned from close analyses of the anecdotes and events depicted in literature.[16] Unlike earlier approaches to the *Satyrica,* like those of Arrowsmith and Sullivan for example, I do not necessarily consider the ideas expressed in the work solely as authorial social commentary but rather as a source for discerning deeper societal and personal concerns. Such an approach may also be applied with profit to those relatively infrequent literary passages in Greco-Roman literature in general in which male sexual dysfunction plays a noticeable role, and here I offer a brief survey of exemplary passages with the aim of demonstrating the essential characteristics of such discourse.

The earliest incorporation of impotence into a literary work as a thematic element appears at *Odyssey* 10.299-301. Just as Odysseus is about to set out to find his companions, the god Hermes warns him to take precautions to defend himself from Circe's magical ability to render him impotent (ἀνήνορα).

> ἀλλὰ κέλευσθαί μιν μακάρων μέγαν ὅρκον ὀμόσσαι
> μή τί τοι αὐτῷ πῆμα κακὸν βουλευσέμεν ἄλλο,
> μή σ' ἀπογυμνωθέντα κακὸν καὶ ἀνήνορα θήῃ.

> But urge her to swear the untroubled gods' mighty oath
> That she is not planning any other evil suffering for you,
> So that she will not cause you to be weak and impotent,
> Once you are unclothed.

To assist Odysseus Hermes gives him the mysterious plant μῶλυ, here described as a φάρμακον (*Od.* 10.302-306):[17]

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[16] This approach consists (and results) in "pulling historical considerations to the center stage of literary analysis." See H. Aram Veeser, ed., *The New Historicism* (New York: Routledge, 1989), xi.

[17] The term φάρμακον as used by Homer signifies a drug whose properties were supernatural in that they produced "magical" effects but was without specific uses in the magical arts of Archaic Greece; such attributions were made by ancient scholars only later. As in this case, the term designated a powerful healing substance. See Fritz Graf, "Excluding the Charming: The Development of the Greek Concept of Magic," in Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 36-37. The operative word μῶλυ appears only here in Homer; all other references in Greek literature to it derive from his passage. See Denys Page, *Folktales in Homer's Odyssey*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973), 64-65 and now Conte, *Hidden Author,* 98 n. 27 with refer-

῞Ως ἄρα φωνήσας πόρε φάρμακον ἀργειφόντης
ἐκ γαίης ἐρύσας, καί μοι φύσιν αὐτοῦ ἔδειξε.
ῥίζῃ μὲν μέλαν ἔσκε, γάλακτι δὲ εἴκελον ἄνθος·
μῶλυ δέ μιν καλέουσιν θεοί· χαλεπὸν δέ τ' ὀρύσσειν
ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι· θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται.

Hermes spoke this way and drew from the ground
An enchanted herb and gave it do me.
And he told me about its natural properties.
It was black at its root, while the flower was milky white.
The gods call it moly, and it is difficult for mortals to dig;
But the gods can do all things.

The possession of the enchanted herb does prevent Circe from drugging Odysseus (although Homer does not relate exactly how it was to be used), and as a result he does not become weak and impotent (κακὸν καὶ ἀνήνορα).[18] Importantly, the worlds of the supernatural and the natural are depicted as clearly intersecting in this passage, and the account reflects the kind of popular belief in the blending of both realms that frequently marks the literary contexts in which male sexual dysfunction appears.[19]

Another, and more specific, example of how popular perceptions about impotence surface in literary texts is Hesiod's well-known account of how the raging heat of summer, abetted by the heliacal rising of the Dog Star, increases the wantonness of women and how it correspondingly debilitates the sexual abilities of men (*WD* 582-588).[20]

῏Ημος δὲ σκόλυμός τ' ἀνθεῖ καὶ ἠχέτα τέττιξ
δενδρέῳ ἐφεζόμενος λιγυρὴν καταχεύετ' ἀοιδὴν
πυκνὸν ὑπὸ πτερύγων, θέρεος καματώδεος ὥρῃ,
τῆμος πιόταταί τ' αἶγες, καί οἶνος ἄριστος,
μαχλόταται δὲ γυναῖκες, ἀφαυρότατοι δέ τοι ἄνδρες
εἰσίν, ἐπεὶ κεφαλὴν καὶ γούνατα Σείριος ἄζει,
αὐαλέος δέ τε χρὼς ὑπὸ καύματος·

ences on the parodic identification of the plant with Odysseus's phallus in *CP* 68.22: *mentula moly fuit* ("moly was his prick"). The exact taxonomic identification of the herb has been the subject of much controversy, on which see John Scarborough, "The Pharmacology of Sacred Plants, Herbs, and Roots," in Faraone and Obbink, *Magika Hiera,* 139 and n. 24. On the importance of the passage in demonstrating the relationship of the innate properties and of a substance to its outward appearances, see Pedro Lain Entralgo, *The Therapy of the Word in Classical Antiquity,* ed. and trans. L.J. Rather and John M. Sharp (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) 15-16.

[18] *Od.* 10.341. In his discussion of the Circe episode (*Folktales,* 51-69), Page posits a common origin for this and similar Indo-European tales and demonstrates that Homer expects his audience to be familar with the details of the story.

[19] Scarborough, "Pharmacology," 139 with nn. 25-28.

[20] For a comprehensive commentary on the passage, see Martin L. West, *Hesiod Works and Days.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), ad loc. and for supplementary remarks, J.C.B. Petropoulos, *Heat and Lust: Hesiod's Midsummer Festival Scene Revisited* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994), 83-87.

And when the artichoke is in blossom and the cicada
Constantly pours out from under its wings its clear song
While it sits in a tree, during wearying summer season,
Then goats are the fattest and wine the finest; and
Women are the randiest and men least able to perform
Because Sirius scorches their heads and knees,
And their skin is parched by the burning heat.

Included in this description is another concept derived from popular belief: the connection between male sexuality and two specific parts of the body, the head and the knees. According to this belief, both parts of the body played a role as the seats of male seminal fluid and of male sexual ability. Accordingly, the withering effects of the Dog Star dried up both the seed, thought to derive from the head, and the liquid from the joint cavity of the knee, thought to be the actual fluid essence of life.[21]

The Hesiodic passage stands in contrast to the Homeric account in several important ways, however. First, Hesiod attributes the cause of male impotence not to a supernatural source (such as Circe's feminine enchantment) but to observable and sensible circumstances deriving from the normal processes of the natural world, the descriptive context of which situates ordinary individuals in a familiar social environment. Secondly, while the actual loss of manliness and a description of its manifestations play no role in the Homeric episode, the Hesiodic account emphasizes the reality of sexual dysfunction and recounts clearly its physical aspects. The passage is also rich in natural imagery, reflecting a sense of connection to the natural world. Lastly, mention of preventive measures against a loss of virility (such as is afforded by Hermes' magical plant) or of a cure for the condition finds no place in Hesiod's account.

The popular origins of the Hesiodic account, moreover, are reflected in a fragmentary poem of Alcaeus, couched in an invitation to drink wine and depicting the imagery of summer heat and male debility in very similar terms (Fr. 347LP 1-4, 6-8):

τέγγε πλεύμονας οἴνῳ, τὸ γὰρ ἄστρον περιτέλλεται
ἀ δ' ὤρα χαλέπα, πάντα δὲ δίψαισ' ὐπὰ καύματος,
ἄχει δ' ἐκ πετάλων ἄδεα τέττιξ, πτερύγων δ' ὔπα
κακχέει λιγύραν ⟨πύκνον⟩ ἀοίδαν,

[21] For the importance of the knees and head in cases of sexual dysfunction, see the discussion by R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1954), 110-111 and 174-186, esp. 177-178. The general association of an essential life fluid with the bones and marrow is not, however, restricted to the classical Mediterranean cultural milieu. For other examples, see Françoise Héritier-Augé, "Semen and Blood: Some Ancient Theories Concerning Their Genesis and Relationship," in *Fragments for a History of the Body*, 3 vols., ed. Michael Feher, Ramona Naddaf, and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989), 3.168-174.

. . . .
ἄνθει δὲ σκόλυμος, νῦν δὲ γυναῖκες μιαρώταται
λέπτοι δ' ἄνδρες, ἐπεὶ ⟨δὴ⟩ κεφάλην καὶ γόνα Σείριος
ἄσδει...

Wet your insides with wine, for the star is rising
And the season is difficult
With everything thirsting in the burning heat.
The cicada sweetly resounds from leaves
And from beneath its wings
It ever pours out its whirring song
. . . .
The artichoke is also in flower,
And now women are most lustful,
While men are weak
Since Sirius burns the head and knees.

The similarity of these two passages is particularly significant since a common sub-literary or popular source forms the basis for their content; this source seems to have come from the demotic songs of the harvest season from which each poet drew independently.[22]

The subject of impotence appears elsewhere in another literary genre that is also marked by a decidedly popular flavor, the invective poetry of Hipponax. Although the remains of this body of work are largely fragmentary and the general sense of some pieces is notoriously difficult to reconstruct and must remain largely conjectural, it is clear that a number of poems do concern themselves directly with male sexual dysfunction. For example, in the one-line fragment 50Dg the poet / narrator adopts imagery from the world of agriculture to suggest he is being rendered sexually incapable by his enemy Bupalus:

καί νυν ἀρειᾶις σύκινόν με ποιῆσαι.

And now you are threatening to make me impotent.[23]

In the longer but still very fragmentary 78Dg, several elements conceptually linked with male sexuality are present in its description of a

[22] Petropoulos, *Heat and Lust*, 17 and 82. For the theory that these derive from a common source in popular drinking songs, see G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 462-463 with n. 121 and his "Copies and Models in Horace *Odes* 4.1 and 4.2," *Classical World* 87.5 (1994), 421 n. 22.

[23] Because of the weakness of figwood (cf. Theophrastus *HP* 5.3.3) the adjective σύκινος is a synonym for ἀσθενής, on which see H. Degani, ed., *Hipponactis Testimonia et Fragmenta* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983), 72. Degani cites the proverbial phrases συκίνη μάχαιρα and συκίνη βακτηρία and also Horace *Serm.* 1.8.1: *olim truncus eram ficulnus, inutile lignum* ("Once I was a figwood trunk, just useless firewood"), on which see below. Other interpretations, such as Henderson's (*Maculate Muse,* 22), emphasize instead the threat of anal penetration.

ritual curing of impotence similar to one in Petronius.[24] For instance, imagery from the natural world includes the prominent mention of two varieties of fish, an animal recognized as sexually symbolic, and, in conjunction with one of these, a mytho-historical reference to the ithyphallic Kabeiroi; the suggestion of religious ritual is also present.[25] Metaphorical wordplay and prominent references to curative magic rites, which themselves include the use of substances from the natural world and the ritual act of spitting, conclude the piece (13-17):

> ἐ]λθὼν δ' ἐς οἶκον, συκάμινα δ[ει]π[νήσας,
> καὶ τῶι κιμαίωι τόν[δε] ῥῖνα φοινίξα[ς,
> ἐπιπτύσας τρὶς καὶ τ[
> ἀ]π' ὧν ἐδέψατ' ὡς . [
> ...]ν δ' ἐ..[
>
> And having come into the house, having eaten mulberries,
> And having dyed this at its "nose" with the juice,
> Having spit thrice and ...
> From which it was kneaded like ...
> And this...[26]

Hipponax 95Dg, a more complete fragment of sixteen lines, explicitly describes yet another set of curative procedures undertaken to restore sexual ability. Like fragment 78Dg the essential and sometimes sadistic features of this poem reappear in a similar account from the *Satyrica* of Petronius.[27] In the extant lines of the account magical elements initiate the proceedings with a spell spoken in Lydian by a woman involved in the treatment (1):

> ηὔδα δὲ λυδίζουσα· 'βασκι...κρολεα',
>
> And speaking in Lydian (she said) "Bask ... krolea",

During the course of the ensuing procedure, among other painful procedures the narrator undergoes physical abuse to his genitals and a ritual beating with branches of a bush or tree.[28] In addition to the

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[24] Cf. Petronius *Sat.* 131. 5-7. For the interpretations discussed below see Degani, *Hipponactis Testimonia,* 91-92 and especially Martin L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1974), 142-143.

[25] Fish and sexuality: σκ]όμβρ[ο (3) and ἀ]θερίνην ἐς Καβείρ[ων] φοιτε[σκε (11); religious ritual: ὥσπερ Κίκωνα[(7).

[26] Metaphor and wordplay: τόν[δε] ῥῖνα φοινίξα[ς (14), where "nose" (ῥῖνα) stands for the phallus in a magical rite. Other references to magical rites appear at 9-10 in the mention of charcoal embers (μαρίλην ἀνθρ[άκων) and the avoidance of fire (πῦρ οὐκ ἐσερχ.).

[27] See Degani, *Hipponactis Testimonia,* 103-107; West, *Studies,* 144-145; and Henderson, *Maculate Muse,* 22-23 with references. Cf. Petronius *Sat.* 138.1-2.

[28] Genital abuse: 3 (καί μοι τὸν ὄρχιν τῆς φαλ[ ); ritual beating: 4 and 7.

prevalence of both natural and supernatural elements in these last two examples, what is especially significant and what differentiates them from the accounts of male sexual debility in both Homer and Hesiod is the prominence given a first person narrative. Thus, not only do these lines describe activities specific to impotence and its cure, but they also relate the actual reactions of the narrator from his individual viewpoint.

A similar literary outlook obtains in much of the *Palatine Anthology*, among whose sixteen books popular elements are frequently encountered.[29] In a number of pieces of distinctly erotic content impotence appears as a primary thematic element; and examples occur throughout the collection but especially in Book 12, where the chief emphasis is on an appreciation of sexual relations with boys.[30] Several of these poems serve as good indicators of the way that male sexual dysfunction finds representation in popularly derived contextual landscapes such as the epigram. For example, in *AP* 12.11 (Strato) the first person narrator lightly dismisses an incident of his sexual failure despite the willingness of his partner and then humorously describes his condition with a popular pun.

Ἐχθὲς ἔχων ἀνὰ νύκτα Φιλόστρατον, οὐκ ἐδυνήθην,
  κείνου, πῶς εἴπω; πάντα παρασχομένου.
ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μηκέτ' ἔχοιτε φίλοι φίλον, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ πύργου
  ῥίψατ', ἐπεὶ λίην Ἀστυάναξ γέγονα.

Last night I was with Philostratos, and I couldn't do it,
  Even though he was (how will I say?) submissive.
But, dear friends, may you no longer count me a friend.
  Rather hurl me from a tower, since I'm too much an Astyanax.

The vocabulary of impotence appears in the first couplet in the narrator's use of οὐκ ἐδυνήθην to indicate his inability to perform. In the second couplet the emphasis shifts to self-deprecation as the poet, reflecting the vulgar tendencies of the genre, puns on the Greek στύειν ("to have an erection") and on the name Ἀστυάναξ, that is ἀ + στύειν ("to have no erection").[31] While a similarly inopportune fail-

[29] The frequency of vulgarisms in the collection, especially those parts written in the Early Imperial period and afterward, indicates the popular character of these epigrams. See Alan Cameron, "Strato and Rufinus," *Classical Quarterly* 32 (1982), 163-164 and n. 6.

[30] Although the second century poet Strato has given his name to Book 12 as a whole, in fact a wide range of earlier material from other anthologies has been included by later compilers. See Richlin, *Garden*, 34-39 and P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, "Strato and the Musa Puerilis," *Hermes* 100 (1972), 215-240 for a brief overview of the material.

[31] Drawn from a primary obscenity, στύειν is among a small number of words that refer directly to organs or activities deemed improper. The pun itself appears as

ure to succeed sexually with the long-desired Thalia is the subject of *AP* 5.47 (Rufinus), the poem itself also provides a more illustrative description of the psychology of sexual disappointment:

Πολλάκις ἠρασάμην σε λαβὼν ἐν νυκτί, Θάλεια,
  πληρῶσαι θαλερῇ θυμὸν ἐρωμανίῃ·
νῦν δ' ὅτε ⟨μοι⟩ γυμνὴ γλυκεροῖς μελέεσσι πέπλησαι,
  ἔκλυτος ὑπναλέῳ γυῖα κέκμηκα κόπῳ.
θυμὲ τάλαν, τί πέπονθας; ἀνέγρεο, μηδ' ἀπόκαμνε·
  ζητήσεις ταύτην τὴν ὑπερευτυχίνην.

Many times I prayed I might hold you at night, Thalia,
  To sate my heart-on with a vibrant love mania.
But now you are naked with your sweet limbs next to me,
  I am wearied, limp with the exhaustion of sleep in my limbs
Miserable heart-on, what've you suffered? Wake up.
  Do not drift off. Later you will long for this very lucky event.

Word play with sexual overtones is present here as well. In the initial couplet the resonance of Θάλεια and θαλερῇ relies upon the familiar associations of the fresh vibrancy of the plant world with the flush of erotic activity for its effect. Likewise, the use of θυμός (2, 5) in referring to the stimulated penis echoes the obscene connotations found in Hipponax and in the Planudean collection.[32] The second couplet functions transitionally as the narrator plaintively addresses his bedmate and then laments the listlessness of his physical condition. More importantly, the remaining lines of the poem concern themselves entirely with the narrator's harsh reproach to his uncooperative organ and with his certain conclusion that in the future it will come to regret its failure at this missed opportunity.[33]

A similar but much more direct verbal assault forms the lone couplet of *AP* 12.216 (Strato).

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early as Old Comedy in such titles as Eubulus's Ἄστυτοι. See Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 35 and 112. In Greek epigram outright obscenity was infrequent, figurative language being the preferred manner of expression. See Richlin, *Garden*, 37 and Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 219-221.

[32] Cf. 30.1Dg: λιμῶι γένηται ξηρός· ἐν δὲ τῶι θυμῶι ("He becomes dry in his hunger; and in his *thumos*"), on which Degani comments: *non animi sed mentulae languorem poeta queritur* ("The poet is lamenting the listlessness not of his spirit but of his prick"). Cf. also the description of Priapus at *AP* 16.242 3-4 (Erycius):

ἔχει δέ σε δίψα γυναικῶν,
ὦ 'γαθέ, καὶ σπαργᾷς θυμὸν ἅπαντα πόθοις.

And a thirst for women holds you,
My good man, and you swell your entire tool with lust.

[33] For the address to the ineffective penis as a topos in Latin literature, cf. Petronius *Sat.* 132.7-11, Ovid *Amores* 3.7, and the Priapic poem from the *Appendix Vergiliana* discussed below. Further discussions in Richlin, *Garden*, 116-118 and Conte, *Hidden Author*, 188 and 192-194.

Νῦν ὀρθή, κατάρατε, καὶ εὔτονος, ἡνίκα μηδέν·
ἡνίκα δ' ἦν ἐχθές, οὐδεν ὅλως ἀνέπνεις.

Now you are stiff, damn you, and hard, when there's no reason to be;
Yesterday when there was, you weren't inflating one bit.

In this case, however, cursing his traitorous organ for its inability to perform satisfactorily at an opportune moment, the narrator upbraids it not only because it has failed him but because it now stands defiantly erect. In keeping with the nature of the genre, the poet also incorporates a popularly held concept into his metaphorical description of the lifeless and uncooperative offender; for while the final clause of the poem (οὐδὲν ὅλως ἀνέπνεις) literally indicates the act of breathing and here means something like "you were completely dead," it suggests as well the commonly held notion that inflation by πνεῦμα was responsible for an erection.[34] Another verbal attack appears at *AP* 12.232 (Scythinus) although this particular piece is marked by more graphic descriptions of sexual activity and by a tone decidedly threatening to the offending member.

Ὀρθὸν νῦν ἕστηκας ἀνώνυμου οὐδὲ μαραίνῃ,
ἐντέτασαι δ' ὡς ἂν μή ποτε παυσόμενον·
ἀλλ' ὅτε μοι Νεμεσηνὸς ὅλον παρέκλινεν ἑαυτόν,
πάντα διδοὺς ἃ θέλω, νεκρὸν ἀπεκρέμασο.
τείνεο, καὶ ῥησσου, καὶ δάκρυε· πάντα ματαίως,
οὐχ ἕξεις ἔλεον χειρὸς ἀφ' ἡμετέρης.

Now you stand up straight, nameless thing, and are not limp at all,
And you are so stiff that you won't ever stop;
But when Nemesenos completely bent himself over for me,
Granting everything I want, you hung there dead.
So you are stiff, bursting and weeping, all in vain:
You will not get pity from my hand.

Finally, in *AP* 12.240 (Strato) the narrator laments the effects of old age on his sexual ability and using patently obscene language, describes how really useless his sex organs are.[35]

Ἤδη μοι πολιαὶ μὲν κροτάφοισιν ἔθειραι,
καὶ πέος ἐν μηροῖς ἀργὸν ἀποκρέμαται·
ὄρχεις δ' ἄπρηκτοι, χαλεπὸν δέ με γῆρας ἱκάνει.
οἴμοι· πυγίζειν οἶδα, καὶ οὐ δύναμαι.

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[34] See below, Chapter Two. The terminology also suggests the identification of the penis with a muscial instrument and of related activity with fellatio, on which see Maxwell-Stuart, "Strato," 224-225.

[35] On πέος as an example of an "unadorned obscenity" see Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 2 and 35.

Already the hair on my temples is greying,
And my pecker hangs idly between my thighs.
My testicles are useless; hard old age has reached me.
Damn! I know how to bugger and I can't!

Alongside the familiar terminology associated with impotence (ἀποκρέμαται, ἄπρηκτοι, οὐ δύναμαι),[36] moreover, an important self-reflective element functions in this epigram as the speaker widens his perspective on sexual failure from the specifics of one particular incident to the larger issue of his emotional frustration with the physical debility brought upon by age.[37] In their representation of male sexual dysfunction, each of these exemplary poems reveals precisely how a first-person account of the emotional reactions to impotence is interwoven with a straightforward and often graphic description of a social situation.

The depiction of the impotent male in Latin literature follows the same general patterns as are outlined above, and except for *Amores* 3.7 of Ovid and the *Satyrica* of Petronius (both of which are examined in more detail below), incorporation of the affliction into creative literature is similarly restricted to those works whose generic origins, literary content, and appeal lie firmly rooted in the popular sphere and which are often marked by the abuse common to invective. Additionally, works of loftier pedigree that treat matters of popular concern may also include impotence as part of a larger thematic element. In any case, reflective comment upon the condition of the impotent male may consist of both general authorial conclusions as well as the first-person narrator's more specific thoughts about his situation.

Two of Horace's *Epodes* offer graphic examples of how impotence is incorporated into the larger realm of invective and especially of how the discourse of attack actually derives from a personal response to male sexual powerlessness.[38] Thus the representation of impotence in the poetry of invective originates in and is expressed by a reflective personal voice which enables the poet / narrator to express

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[36] The emphasis on the uselessness of the testicles comports well with the concept that the organ was especially important for virility. See Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 125 and n. 94.

[37] Cf. Strato's warning to Kyris about the dangers of aging (*AP* 12.215):

Νῦν ἔαρ εἶ, μετέπειτα θέρος· κἄπειτα τί μέλλεις
Κῦρις; βούλευσαι, καὶ καλάμη γὰρ ἔσῃ.

Now you are springtime, later summer. What next will you be, Kyris?
Think about it, for you too will be a dry reed.

[38] See Ellen Oliensis, "Canidia, Canicula, and the Decorum of Horace's *Epodes*," *Arethusa* 24.1 (1991), 122-124.

those concerns linked to social and cultural norms.[39] In *Epode* 8, for example, it is the narrator's revulsion at the sexual request of an old woman (*vetula*) that launches his verbal attack and affords him the opportunity to explain his physical inability to cooperate (1-6):

Rogare longo putidam te saeculo
  viris quid enervet meas,
cum sit tibi dens ater, et rugis vetus
  frontem senectus exaret,
hietque turpis inter aridas natis
  podex velut crudae bovis?

You'd ask what makes my erection soft,
  You stinking, age-old thing,
When your teeth are black, old age
  Plows up your brow with wrinkles,
And between your leathery buttocks
  Gapes an anus filthy like that of an indigestive cow?

After another series of attacks upon the woman's appearance, wealth, social status, and cultural pretensions (7-16), the narrator again returns to the theme of impotence, suggesting in his own defense that all other men fail with her as well and that she must resort to oral stimulation to arouse them (17-20):

inlitterati num minus nervi rigent,
  minusve languet fascinum?
quod ut superbo provoces ab inguine,
  ore adlaborandum est tibi.

Do the tools of the unlearned stiffen any less
  Or does this magic wand wilt any less?
The thing which you must work on with your mouth
  So you can arouse it out from its proud loins.

To make his point in these two harsh descriptions of his own sexual debility, then, Horace relies on the familiar and colloquial vocabulary of impotence.[40]

In *Epode* 12 the narrator repeats the familiar litany of abuse against an old and undesirable woman, again emphasizing that his limp organ is an accurate indicator of his revulsion while specifically intro-

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[39] The coarse description of sexual matters and especially of impotence also plays a larger role throughout the collection, combining with political and social concerns to present a truly Archilochean picture of Late Republican Rome. See William Fitzgerald, "Power and Impotence in Horace's *Epodes*" *Ramus* 17 (1988), 176-177, 185-186 (*Epode* 8), and 188-189 (*Epode* 12) and David Mankin, *Horace: Epodes*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 6-10.

[40] E.g., *viris...enervet* (2); *rigent, nervi, languet, fascinum* (17-18), on the semantic particulars of which, see Mankin, *Epodes*, 152-158 and references.

ducing an air of obscenity in his attack with the phrase *pene soluto* (7-9):[41]

qui sudor vietis et quam malus undique membris
crescit odor, cum pene soluto
indomitam properat rabiem sedare...

What sweat on those withered limbs,
And how bad an odor arises all over
When she races to sate her uncontrolled lust
While my pecker lies soft...

After several more lines of vicious criticism of the woman's appearance and habits by her attacker, the frustrated woman herself speaks out in her own voice. She levels against the narrator the charge of being more capable with his other lovers than with her, in a manner similar to other literary *topoi* in which a disappointed lover upbraids a sexually deficient partner (14-16):[42]

Inachia langues minus ac me,
Inachiam ter nocte potes, mihi semper ad unum
mollis opus. pereat male, quae te
Lesbia quaerenti taurum monstravit inertem...

You go limp less for Inachia than for me;
You can do her three times a night! For me
You are always floppy for one task.
I wish a horrible death for that Lesbia
Who pointed me to you, limp as you are,
When I was looking for a bull of a man...

In this angry tirade the *vetula* incorporates the same commonplace language of sexual inadequacy as that used by the narrator himself here and in *Epode* 8.[43] The thematic result of the stinging retort is that the burden of proof for the actual cause of the sexual failure is shifted back onto the impotent male himself. What is more, the personal voice of the narrator, far from being a definitive source of information about the sufferings of the victim of impotence, is reduced to a hollow defensive mechanism for explaining the victim's inability to perform.

Elsewhere in Horatian verses only tinged with invective, the thematic element of impotence appears in a somewhat milder form. In *Epode* 15, for example, Horace's punning reference on his own cognomen and his sexual powerlessness partakes of little of the self-

[41] Mankin, *Epodes*, 208.

[42] E.g., Ovid *Amores* 3.7.77-80 and Petronius *Sat.* 128.1. Tibullus fails sexually because of his memory of Delia and is called bewitched (*devotum*) by his unsatified partner (1.5.39-41). See below, Chapter Two.

[43] *langues, potes, inertem.*

assertive sexual attack of the *Epodes* discussed above.[44] And in *Serm.* 1.8 Priapus, a lesser divinity best known in Roman literary examples as the serio-comic guardian of boundaries and gardens, relates in his own voice an incident in which the usual protective abilities of the erect phallus fail.[45] Ordinarily this ithyphallic defender of protected space functions as the very essence of a menacingly aggressive sexuality, driving off all transgressors with the threat of penetration.[46] Here, however, the issue of sexual powerlessness turns on premises more symbolic than actual; for it is not a sexual assault with a clearly erect penis which drives off the witches intruding on restricted territory but rather the loud flatulence emanating from the split figwood of which the deity's statue is made.[47] Indeed, even while he calls attention to his erect organ, the preeminent symbol of masculine control, its usual power remains ineffective.[48]

While Horace's *Serm.* 1.8 itself is perhaps the best-known literary representative of poems concerning Priapus (*Priapea*),[49] impotence figures as a thematic element in a number of these chiefly epigrammatic works of diverse generic and metrical pedigree dating from Hellenistic and later times.[50] Because in some poems the god himself is the speaker while in others he is addressed by a suppliant, these poems offer worthwhile and illustrative examples of the representation of impotence in those literary contexts where an aggressive male sexuality is the particular focus. Such concerns surface in a number

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[44] 12: *nam siquid in Flacco vir est* ("For if there is any man at all in Flaccus"). See Oliensis, "Canidia," 124-125 for the literary implications of the concepts of softness and hardness in love elegy and elsewhere.

[45] See W. H. Parker, *Priapea: Poems for a Phallic God* (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 15-17.

[46] Richlin, *Garden*, 9 and 66.

[47] The correspondences between figwood and the penetrated anus is discussed in Judith P. Hallet, "Pepedi / Diffissa Nate Ficus: Priapic Revenge in Horace, *Satires* I.8" *Rheinisches Museum* 124 (1981), 342-346. In addition, *truncus...ficulnus, inutile lignum* (1) may suggest the kind of weakness associated with impotence. See above on Hipponax 50Dg and also E. M. O'Connor, *Symbolum Salacitatis: A Study of the God Priapus as a Literary Character*. Studien zur Klassischen Philologie, Band 40 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989), 83-84, where, however, the idea of impotence is not suggested.

[48] 5: *obscenoque ruber porrectus ab inguine palus* ("A red rod stretched out from these lewd loins"). See Oliensis, "Canidia," 122.

[49] Other noteworthy literary examples are Tibullus 1.4 (where the god is entreated as a *praeceptor amoris*) and Martial *Ep.* 6.16, 49, 72, 73. For a comprehensive overview of Latin Priapic poetry see O'Connor, *Symbolum*, 66-88 and Parker, *Priapea*, 10-31.

[50] Found mostly in the *Greek Anthology*, Greek Priapic poems are generally less varied in content than their Roman counterparts and may have been influenced by them. Both Greek and Roman Priapic poems may be divided into several broad generic categories, especially *anathematika* (dedications), *erotika* (love poems), and *paraenetika* (poems of exhortation), a special class of which are the *minae* (threats). See O'Connor, *Symbolum*, 26-30; 55-56; 66-67 and Parker, *Priapea*, 1-9.

of the Latin poems that make up the Early Imperial collection known as the *Carmina Priapea*.[51] In *CP* 26, for example, the god himself complains of sexual exhaustion brought about by excessive sexual activity and asks for an unexpected solution to his condition (1-6):[52]

> Porro—nam quis erit modus—Quirites,
> aut praecidite seminale membrum,
> quod totis mihi noctibus fatigant
> vicinae sine fine prurientes
> vernis passeribus salaciores,
> aut rumpar, nec habebitis Priapum.

> Further fellow Romans (for what will be the limit?)
> Either cut away this spermy organ of mine,
> Because through my entire nights
> The sexed-up neighborhood womenfolk,
> Hornier than sparrows in Spring,
> Endlessly wear me out.
> Or else I'll be burst,
> And you'll have no more Priapus.

Ordinarily the eager aggressor and perpetrator of sexual assault, the worn-out god, in an inversion of the usual problems plaguing the victim of impotence, is thus reduced to admitting his painful inability to maintain his physical endurance against the onslaught of wildly aggressive women whose sexual behavior reverses gender relationships and reduces the god to a passive role.[53] Yet even though he clearly pleads for help with a description of himself as physically depleted, in a concession to the prevailing social and cultural constructions of masculinity, he still offers a reassertion of his former powers, emphasizing especially the virility of his onetime victims (7-10):

> ipsi cernitis, effutatus ut sim
> confectusque macerque pallidusque,
> qui quondam ruber et valens solebam
> fures caedere quamlibet valentes.

> You yourselves see how ground right out I am,
> How worn out, wan and white,
> I who once red and stiff
> Used to strike out against thieves
> However masculine they were.

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[51] On the contents of the collection and the vexed question of its authorship, see Richlin, *Garden*, 120-125 and 141-143.

[52] See discussion and further references in O'Connor, *Symbolum*, 123-124.

[53] The wantonness of the women is further emphasized by the use of *salaciores*, originally and ordinarily applied to male animals as they mount (*salire*) the female. See Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 206.

Finally, the two closing lines reflect the kind of physical responses thought to result from sexual overexertion (11-12):[54]

> defecit latus et periculosam
> cum tussi miser expuo salivam.
>
> But my loins have failed me
> And when I cough, I spit out a dangerous spittle.

These lines, in conjunction with the god's boasts about his former abilities (9-10), serve to bolster his claim to be more than a crudely shaped and insensate block of wood. In this sense the god takes on an aspect of humanity and speaks of impotence in human terms. Thus, while this self-depiction of Priapus, ordinarily a buffoon-like character, should not be regarded as an accurate barometer for the reactions of the actual (or even literary) sufferers of male sexual dysfunction, the first person account by the god does reveal the tensions underlying those cultural and social premises about the affliction which appear with some consistency in the literary and sub-literary record.

Some of these concerns also appear prominently in *CP* 37, a first-person description by a grateful worshiper who has dedicated a votive tablet to Priapus in return for a successful cure of his impotence:[55]

> Cur pictum memori sit in tabella
> membrum quaeritis, unde procreamur?
> cum penis mihi forte laesus esset
> chiurgique manum miser timerem,
> dis me legitimis nimisque magnis,
> ut Phoebo puta filioque Phoebi,
> curatum dare mentulam verebar;
> huic dixi: 'fer opem, Priape, parti,
> quoius tu pater, ipse pars videris;
> qua salva sine sectione facta
> ponetur tibi picta, quam levaris,
> compar consimilisque concolorque.'
> promisit fore mentulam movit
> pronutu deus rogata fecit.
>
> You ask why there is an organ
> Shown on the tablet, by which we are restored?
> When my penis was by chance stricken
> And I was afraid of the hand of the surgeon (poor me!),

[54] The "dangerous saliva" may be in fact be bloody; and considering the specific context in which it appears, it may actually suggest a bloody discharge from the penis. Cf. the similar description of the result of excessive sexual activity by Theophrastus (*HP* 9.18.9) discussed in Chapter Two below.

[55] For the dedicatory form of the poem and its literary predecessors, see Vincenz Buchheit, *Studien zum Corpus Priapeorum* (Munich: Beck, 1962), 77-78.

With the rightful gods (like Phoebus and his son)
Too important for this, I feared
Giving my pecker to them to cure.
So I said to this god, "Priapus, to this part
Of which you seem to be the father, bring aid!
For you, it illustrated without any surgery done
Will be dedicated, exactly the same in size and color."
The god promised it would happen,
Moved his prick in a nod,
And enacted what I asked.

While the parodic nature of the piece ought not be disregarded, its most obvious aspects are the personal concerns that surface, including the emphasis on the role of chance in the affliction, the mistrust of and lack of confidence in human treatment, and the realization that the cosmic concerns of the gods do not include the smaller concerns of the ordinary individual. Indeed, three aspects of the piece are especially significant: the involvement of an anonymous third party to whom the sufferer tells his story, the affectionate tone of the address to Priapus, and the acceptance of the traditional *do ut des* character of the appeal. Taken together, these reveal an intimate picture of a sufferer who is closely involved both with his affliction and with the various possibilities for cure and for whom a social openness serves as an attendant curative activity. Similarly, the rejection of physical treatment as ineffective and dangerous in favor of divine intervention signals an important cultural and personal paradigm.

Yet male sexual failure as represented in the Priapic corpus is caused by a number of factors, and its cure may be found beyond the confines of either social or divine interaction. Even the god himself is not spared the difficulties of the malady. In the descriptive heading accompanying one manuscript version of *CP* 63,[56] a lengthy complaint by the god about his exposure to the elements, for example, a copyist has suggested the god's own impotence: *Priapus conqueritur quod impotens sit propter loci asperitatem* ("Priapus complains that he is impotent because of the harshness of his situation"). Now even though there is no identifiable reference to impotence in the poem itself, the assumption by the scribe may very well have been made based upon the initial mention of the scorching heat produced by the Dog Star, whose contribution to male sexual debility has been discussed above (1-3):[57]

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[56] The inscription accompanies Parisinus Latinus 8206 (P).

[57] See Parker, *Priapea,* 167-169 who, however, does not recognize the reference to Sirius. On the other hand, in *CP* 62 wordplay (*erigere*) associates Sirius and Erigone with Priapus's erection. See Parker, *Priapea,* 164-165 and the extended discussion in Buchheit, *Studien,* 124-126.

Parum est, quod hic cum fixerunt mihi sedem,
agente terra per caniculam rimas
siticulosam sustinemus aestatem?

Since they've fixed a place for me here,
Isn't it enough that, with the earth cracking
From the Dog Star's blaze, I endure dried-out summer heat?

More definitive descriptions of the god's sexual inability appear elsewhere. For example, in a poem reminiscent of the bitter attack upon the *vetula* in Horace's *Epode* 8 and related to similar examples elsewhere in the collection,[58] *CP* 46 shows how male disinterest in sex results from revulsion at an unattractive female partner. Priapus himself recounts the defects of a young woman (1-6):

O non candidior puella Mauro:
sed morbosior omnibus cinaedis,
Pygmaeo brevior gruem timenti,
ursis asperior pilosiorque,
Medis laxior Indicisve bracis:
mallem scilicet ut libenter ires.

Dear girl, no whiter than a Moor
But more sickly than each and every pathic,
Shorter than a Pygmy trembling at a crane,
More bristly and hairier than bears,
And with a crotch looser
Than Indian and Persian britches,
I'd really prefer that you leave of your own accord.

In this case, however, it is Priapus himself, in the role of the sexually listless narrator, who introduces another element to the curative paradigm: the use of plant material as a stimulant (7-10):

nam quamvis videar satis paratus,
erucarum opus est decem maniplis,
fossas inguinis ut teram dolemque
cunni vermiculos scaturrientes.

For while I might seem ready enough,
Ten bunches of rocket is what's needed
For me to bore into the dugout of your crotch
And to hew out the squirming worms in your snatch.

The use of stimulative plant material (*eruca*)[59] by the very divinity who personally embodies male sexual arousal and whom the impotent themselves importune for a restoration of their sexual powers illustrates how highly regarded were the curative and prophylactic

[58] E.g., *CP* 12 and 57. See Richlin, *Garden*, 121-122.

[59] *Eruca* (*Brassica eruca*) was one of many plants traditionally considered highly stimulative and is often described by the adjective *salax* ("lustful").

uses of such natural substances. More importantly, the collocation of the supernatural and the natural approaches to illness serves to highlight the essential dichotomy of the ancient concept of cause and of cure, a topic examined in more detail in succeeding chapters.

The concept of physical cause and cure emerges as well in the next poem of the collection (*CP* 47), generically a *vocatio ad cenam.*[60] Priapus, here perhaps to be imagined as a small sculpture set upon the dining table, threateningly demands his rightful due from those invited to dinner and refers to the power of *eruca,* willing in the manner of a binding magical spell (*defixio*) the effects of the stimulative herb upon any undutiful guest:[61]

> Quicumque vestrum, qui venetis ad cenam
> libare nullos sustinet mihi versus,
> illius uxor aut amica rivalem
> lasciviendo languidum, precor, reddat,
> et ipse longa nocte dormiat solus
> libidinosis incitatus erucis.

> Whosoever of you who comes here for dinner
> And makes no effort to consecrate a line to me,
> May his wife or bedmate render his rival
> Limp from her horniness, I pray;
> And may he himself lie in bed alone the long night
> Aroused with desire from rocket.

Significantly, while in this brief poem the aspect of divine intervention is restricted only to the god's wish for revenge, there prominently appear two *topoi* relating to those physical aspects of impotence commonly encountered in the literary and popular discourse: on the one hand, that the condition results from sexual exhaustion; and on the other, that an uncontrollable stimulation may be brought about by the ingestion of certain natural substances, in this case *eruca.*

The final poem in the collection, *CP* 80, returns to the reflective motif of the earlier pieces and again incorporates the theme of divine intervention. The narrator, at first apparently appealing to a potential partner, openly laments that his *mentula* is not capable of satisfying his lovers and seeks assistance (1-2):

> At non longa bene est, non stat bene mentula crassa,
> et quam si tractes, crescere posse putes?

> My prick is not long enough and doesn't stand very thick,
> And if you should handle it, you think it'll grow?

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[60] See further Buchheit, *Studien,* 96 n. 1 for literary parallels and pertinent secondary literature.

[61] O'Connor, *Symbolum,* 138.

Finding that approach ineffective, he then despairs of his situation (3-4):

me miserum! cupidas fallit mensura puellas:
non habet haec aliud mentula maius eo.

I'm sunk! Its size isn't enough for the randy tarts.
This prick doesn't have anything bigger to offer.

After consoling himself with the fact that Homer praised Tydeus, small of body but nonetheless powerful (5-6), the distraught narrator proceeds to lament his condition again, linking it to his social standing (7-8):

sed potuit damno nobis novitasque pudorque
esse, repellendus saepius iste mihi.

The unfamiliarity and the shame of it could be my ruination,
And that's what I must bring myself to fight against.

Thus far the poem yields no identifiable reference to sexual dysfunction, and interpretations of this piece vary markedly.[62] Yet the tenor of these lines suggests that both the shame of the sufferer and his resolution to face the social consequences of his problem stem not from the concerns stated at the beginning of the poem but from impotence. In addition, the sentiments expressed comport well with the final couplet where the narrator, presumably in the presence of Priapus and with typical hymnic form,[63] turns now to the god to help him (9-10):

dum vivis, sperare decet: tu, rustice custos,
huc ades et nervis, tente Priape, fave.

While you're alive, it's right to have hope; and you, country guardian,
Come here to give favor to this organ of mine, rigid Priapus.

This last appeal, because it is directed to Priapus as the eternally phallic god and because it closely resembles the prayer of Encolpius in the *Satyrica* (131), also strongly suggests that sexual debility is the actual reason for the personal anguish of the narrator.

Taken as a whole, then, the *Carmina Priapea* collection offers a number of examples of the way impotence functions thematically in texts of a popular nature; it also attests a number of recurring motifs related to the representation of the affliction. Yet such motifs are not limited to this collection. For instance, a Priapic poem from the

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[62] See Parker, *Priapea*, 206-207 with further references.
[63] Buchheit, *Studien*, 147 n. 6.

Appendix Vergiliana (Bücheler 83, Gagliardi 82)[64] incorporates *topoi* common to the literary discourse of impotence. First, the impotent narrator begins by complaining of his recent inability to perform (1-5):

> Quid hoc novi est? quid ira nuntiat deum?
> silente nocte candidus mihi puer
> tepente cum iaceret abditus sinu,
> venus fuit quieta, nec viriliter
> iners senile penis extulit caput.
>
> What's this new stuff? What's the gods' anger telling me?
> In the quiet of the night
> While a pretty boy lay near me
> Snuggled away in my lap,
> The fires of passion too lay quiet.
> Nor did my listless penis raise up its aged head
> Like a man.

He then complains that despite the reverent attention he has dutifully lavished upon the god's image, Priapus has forsaken him and deserves to be abandoned to the elements (6-18). His scathing and threatening address to his own penis (19-45), meanwhile, incorporates a graphic description of the *vetula* as a sex partner, familiar from the Horatian works discussed above (26-37). Ironically, however, it is precisely her sexual efforts that will eventually bring life back to the unresponsive member (31-35):

> tibi haec paratur, ut tuum ter aut quater
> voret profunda fossa lubricum caput.
> licebit aeger angue lentior cubes,
> tereris usque, donec a miser miser
> triplexque quadruplexque compleas specum.
>
> She's all set for you, so that three or four times
> Her deep dugout might feast on your squishy head.
> Sure, you will lie in there weak, more pliant than a snake;
> You'll be rubbed at all the time until, you worthless thing,
> Three times and four you'll swell to fill her grotto.

Of note in this lengthy piece is the narrator's attempt to go beyond a mere defensive explanation of his impotent status (as in the Horatian pieces) and to threaten both the divinity and his own penis, indicating his rejection of a passive acceptance of his physical and mental situation and his adoption of self-assertive stance in which he intends to solve the problem by any means available.

The discourse of sexual dysfunction also appears in other Latin literary works marked by popular and frequently abusive content, and

[64] The authorship is uncertain; see Parker, *Priapea*, 11, 19-21.

some of these incorporate motifs similar to those in Priapic poetry. In this regard several of the epigrams of Martial are noteworthy. In *Ep.* 3.70, for example, the addressee is taunted with losing his wife because of his sexual failure:

Moechus es Aufidiae, qui vir, Scaevine, fuisti;
rivalis fuerat qui tuus, ille vir est.
Cur aliena placet tibi, quae tua non placet, uxor?
numquid securus non potes arrigere?

You're an adulterer with Aufidia, Scaevinus, who were her husband;
And he who'd been your rival, is now her husband.
Why does some other wife please you, when yours doesn't?
Aren't you able to stiffen up without concern?

The narrator's charge that the addressee has failed in an erotic competition, itself a social embarrassment and a distinct liability in an androcentric culture, adds to the personal shame of his sexual debility.

Similar social and cultural issues are combined with legal matters in *Ep.* 12.97 where one Bassus is unable to perform his marital duties because of other sexual distractions:

Uxor cum tibi sit puella qualem
votis vix petat inprobus maritus,
dives, nobilis, erudita, casta,
rumpis, Basse, latus sed in comatis,
uxoris tibi dote quos parasti.
et sic ad dominam reversa languet
multis mentula milibus redempta;
sed nec vocibus excitata blandis
molli pollice nec rogata surgit.
sit tandem pudor aut eamus in ius.
non est haec tua, Basse: vendidisti.

Although you have a wife whom
A shameless husband would scarcely seek in his prayers,
Wealthy, well-born, educated, modest,
You, Bassus, burst your balls among long-haired lads
Whom you've gotten for yourself with your wife's dowry.
And thus your prick, purchased for so many thousands,
When turned to the lady of the house, just hangs there limp.
But neither excited by sweet whisperings
Nor coaxed by her soft thumb does it stiffen up.
Well finally, let there be some sense of shame
Or let's go the legal route for this.
It's not your pecker, Bassus; you've sold it.

Such issues also form the basis for another epigram (9.66) in which Fabullus is accused of sexual failure, the cure for which no external assistance can render:

Uxor cum tibi sit formonsa, pudica, puella,
quo tibi natorum iura, Fabulle, trium?
quod petis a nostro supplex dominoque deoque
tu dabis ipse tibi, si potes arrigere.

Since your wife is a young, comely, and chaste girl,
Of what account to you is the three-children law?
What you seek as a suppliant from our divine master,
You'll grant to yourself—if you can get it up.

Likewise, a similar charge is made against another childless male whose very household reflects his own lack of virility (10.91):

Omnes eunuchos habet Almo nec arrigit ipse:
et queritur pariat quod sua Polla nihil.

Almo has all eunuchs; nor does he himself get it up,
And he complains because his own Polla gives no birth.

In this case the suggestive association of the impotent Almo with his eunuchs is a natural one since male sexual debility was viewed as an essential effeminization of the afflicted in much the same way as castration was. The two lines of *Ep.* 2.45 make the point more tersely:

Quae tibi non stabat praecisa est mentula, Glypte?
demens, cum ferro quid tibi? Gallus eras.

What did not stand for you is your cut-off prick, Glyptus.
Silly fellow, what's with your sword? You're gelded.

Reflecting familiar cultural norms, the poet / narrator here suggests that the impotent male is actually as sexually inadequate and unmasculine as the castrated devotees of the Great Mother.[65]

Other epigrams are more graphically descriptive and attack the personal habits of the impotent male. In *Ep.* 11.25 Linus suffers from an unresponsive organ despite his well-known reputation:

Illa salax nimium nec paucis nota puellis
stare Lino desit mentula. Lingua, cave.

That all too randy prick, known to not just a few girls,
Has failed to stand up for Linus. Watch out, tongue.

Nor does the number of potential partners render assistance to an unresponsive organ (*Ep.* 12.86):

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[65] The most prominent literary representation for the latter is the account of Attis's self-castration in Catullus *c.* 63 where, after the description of the actual act, the poet changes the grammatical referents to Attis from masculine to feminine. See Kenneth Quinn, *Catullus, The Poems*, 2nd ed. (London: MacMillan, 1973), 286-287.

Triginta tibi sunt pueri totidemque puellae:
   una est nec surgit mentula. Quid facies?

You've got thirty boys and the same number of girls
   And but one prick, and it isn't getting up. What'll you do?

Martial's invectives against the impotent male are even more pointedly addressed to two sufferers whose futile attempts at stimulation make them all the more pathetic. Maevius is criticized as having tried every physical approach to arousal with little result (*Ep.* 11.46):

Iam nisi per somnum non arrigis et tibi, Maevi,
   incipit in medios meiere verpa pedes,
truditur et digitis pannucea mentula lassis
   nec levat extinctum sollicitata caput.
Quid miseros frustra cunnos culosque lacessis?
   summa petas: illic mentula vivit anus.

Now you don't get it up, Maevius, unless while you're asleep
   And your prick begins to piss on the middle of your feet.
Your wrinkled pecker is pushed by your weary fingers
   And doesn't lift its dead head even when shaken hard.
Why do you go after cunts and butts in vain?
   Seek the heights: there an old woman prick lives.

In *Ep.* 3.75, on the other hand, Lupercus cannot rely either on arousal deriving from natural sources or on sexual services rendered for a price:

Stare, Luperce, tibi iam pridem mentula desit,
   luctaris demens tu tamen ariggere.
sed nihil erucae faciunt bulbique salaces
   inproba nec prosunt iam satureia tibi.
coepisti puras opibus corrumpere buccas:
   sic quoque non vivit sollicitata Venus.
Mirari satis hoc quisquam vel credere possit,
   quod non stat, magno stare, Luperce, tibi?

For a long time now, Lupercus, your prick has failed to stand
   While you in your crazed state struggle to get it up.
But servings of rocket and randy bulbs offer no help
   Nor does shameless savory profit you now.
You begin to corrupt innocent cheeks with your wealth,
   But passion aroused in this way doesn't come to life.
Could anyone at all be amazed enough at this or believe it:
   What won't get up costs you a good deal of money?

This final example from Martial is particularly important in its depiction of the irrational (*demens*) frustrations of the impotent male and the social opprobrium attending his futile attempts to achieve sexual satisfaction by compromising others with money.

In the second-century prose fiction of Apuleius, these same elements figure prominently in a passage especially illustrative of the social and cultural complexity associated with male sexual deficiency and where the issue of sexual potency and intentional effeminization through castration are brought to the fore.[66] Thus, in Lucius's eyewitness account of his own purchase by castrated priests and of their abduction of a young man (*Metamorphoses* 8.24-30), sexual frustration, irrationality, a negative depiction of attempts at sexual compromise by the sexually deficient male, and a clearly stated condemnation of the effeminate, though still desirous, cultists are all brought together. The narrator, himself transformed by magic into an ass, recounts the episode with typical Apuleian liveliness; and while the attitudes expressed must be traced to the fictional narrator, familiar terms condemning the effeminate male resonate throughout the account.[67]

For example, Philebus, the priest of the Syrian goddess Atargatis who purchases Lucius, is depicted as the very essence of effeminacy. The narrator emphasizes his revulsion for his new owner by twice calling him a *cinaedus* in detailing his disgust at the appearance of the balding old man and the public activities of his fellow worshipers (8.24.571):

> scitote qualem: cinaedum et senem cinaedum, caluum quidem, sed cincinnis semicanis et pendulis capillatum, unum de triuiali popularium faece, qui per plateas et oppidacymbalis et crotalis personantes deamque Syriam circumferentes mendicare compellunt.
>
> But know what kind of person he was: a cinaedus and an old one to boot, sure enough bald, but with curled hair grey and hanging down, someone from the ordinary dregs of the populace, who, playing loudly on cymbals and rattles through the streets and towns and carrying about the Syrian goddess, force her to beg for support.

Baldness alone was enough to suggest promiscuity, and the narrator's contrast between the partially bald Philebus with his dangling curls and the religious, that is the shaved, baldness of the celibate worshippers of Isis serves further to emphasize the lack of control and the sexual profligacy characteristic of the entire retinue.[68] The auctioneer's suggestion to Philebus that he inspect the ass's genital area, moreover, points to an awareness in the popular mentality of sexual activity between animals and *cinaedi* drawn from the mimetic performances.[69]

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[66] Schlam, *Metamorphoses,* 72.

[67] B. L. Hijmans et al., eds., *Apuleius Madaurensis Metamorphoses. Book VIII. Text, Introduction and Commentary* (Groningen: Forsten, 1985), 9.

[68] Hijmans, *Metamorphoses VIII,* 205-206, 288.

[69] *Met.* 8.25.2: *Nam si faciem tuam mediis eius feminibus i<m>miseris, facile periclitaberis, quam grandem tibi demonstret patientem* ("For if you will stick your face in between his

The initial impression that Philebus makes upon Lucius is borne out in the ensuing account of the activities of the priests, and the narrative itself, like that of Catullus *c.* 63, calls attention to the emasculated nature of the entire band by referring to them with nouns and adjectives in the feminine gender. For instance, Philebus tells the auctioneer that should anything untoward happen to the statue of the goddess because of Lucius's unruliness, he himself would be like a distressed female (*misera*) and that he would act accordingly (8.25.575):

> an me putas, inepte, iumento fero posse deam committere, ut turbatum repente divinum deiciat simulacrum egoque misera cogar crinibus solutis discurrere et deae meae humi iacenti aliquem medicum quaerere?
>
> Fool, do you think that I can give the goddess over to a wild-acting beast of burden to upset her and throw down her divine image all of a sudden? Why, in a terrible state I'd be driven to run all around with my hair all undone and to look for some healer for my goddess lying on the ground.

The description of the bald priest with his disheveled locks introduces yet another image of his femininity, since this sign of mourning befits only women.[70]

The narrative representation of the priests as feminized males continues after Philebus, bringing Lucius back to his fellow devotees, enters their compound. In calling their attention to his new sexual plaything he addresses them directly as girls,[71] which affords Lucius the opportunity to comment upon their decidedly unmasculine appearance and behavior (8.26.576):

> sed illae puellae chorus erat cinaedorum, quae statim exultantes in gaudium fractae rauca et effeminata voce clamores absonos intollunt...
>
> But "those girls" were actually a band of pathics who, immediately leaping up joyously, with their hoarse and womanly voice lift up jarring shouts...

In their own self-representation, moreover, the band of worshippers actually do regard themselves as soft and effeminate, according to Lucius at least. Thus, upon realizing that the ass is not the slave boy whom they had expected their leader to bring home in order to satisfy their passions, they nonetheless bid Philebus share his new acquisition with them all (8.26.577):

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thighs, easily you'll test out how much he'll put up with"). The word *patientia* here has sexual overtones as well. Hijmans, *Metamorphoses VIII,* 213-214.

[70] Hijmans, *Metamorphoses VIII,* 218.

[71] *Met.* 8.26.576: *puellae, servum vobis pulchellum en ecce mercata perduxi* ("Oh girls, look

> et 'heus', aiunt, 'cave ne solus exedas tam bellum scilicet pullulum, sed nobis quoque tuis palumbulis nonnumquam inpertias.'
>
> And they said, "Hey, don't you use up this really fine little chick all alone, but send some sometime over to us, your little wood dovies."

Lucius's morally indignant description of the effeminacy of these priests, however, is not restricted only to their mannerisms; for in narrating their wild and masochistic rituals his disgust extends to their very bodies as he calls them half-men, a word commonly used of the castrated *Galli,* and sees in their spilled blood the very essence of their unmanliness.[72] Yet despite the numerous examples of the effeminate nature of Philebus's band, their real nature as libidinous but sexually frustrated males becomes evident in Lucius's account of their sexual assault upon a young country boy whom they have brought back with them after a visit to the baths. The description of the young man attests to his virile attributes (8.29.586):

> ac dehinc lauti quendam fortissimum rusticanum industria laterum atque imis ventris bene praeparatum comitem cenae secum adducunt...
>
> And then having bathed, they lead along with them a certain very strong country fellow as a dinner companion, well prepared in his ability to perform in his groin area...

Scarcely has the dinner begun, however, and Philebus's followers can no longer contain their desire:

> paucisque admodum praegustatis olusculis ante ipsam mensam spurcissima illa propudia ad inlicitiae libidinis extrema flagitia infandis uriginibus efferantur...
>
> and with only a few vegetables tasted before the main meal itself, those foulest and disgraceful beasts are being driven into a frenzy by their unmentionable lusts to perform the wildest atrocities of forbidden passion...[73]

And so these "half-men," with their soft and exotic ways on display to all and aroused by the sight of the young man who typifies the very essence of virility, when driven by the aggressiveness of their own male passion, nevertheless take the traditionally active role in this sexual encounter despite their own physical inability to perform sexually. In this sense the Apuleian portrayal accurately reflects both

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here at the pretty little slave I brought home for you when I was shopping").

[72] *Met.* 8.28.583: *semiviris*; 8.28.584: *spurcitia sanguinis effeminati.* See also Hijmans, *Metamorphoses VIII,* 247 and 249-250.

[73] The diction of the passage is also sexually suggestive as well. Hijmans, *Metamorphoses VIII,* 255-258.

the frustrations of the sexually debilitated male and the disapproving, even hostile sentiments of a society in which the cultural paradigm is preeminently defined by an open expression of virility.

Nevertheless, while it is clear from these literary artifacts that representations of impotence and the discourse about it reflect a wide range of cultural attitudes, it also becomes clear that information drawn from writers of natural history, medicine, and related fields merits consideration as well. It is against the backdrop of these works that the pertinent material in fictional representations of the impotent male may best be analyzed. Since, however, ancient natural historical and medical writings for the most part do not present a unified or even coherent picture of the problems of impotence, no overarching description of any one passage is warranted here. Rather, a survey of the utility of the sources and of their relationship to popular aspects of the problem will be sufficient. I treat specific passages at appropriate points in the investigation proper.

In contrast to the information about impotence and about its social and cultural implications from fictional works such as those treated above, at first glance the non-fictional works containing information about sexuality appear to be relatively straightforward sources from which to draw additional information. Some cases clearly support this observation. For instance, the account by Suetonius of the emperor Tiberius's impotence and his efforts to remedy it (*Tiberius* 42-45), while descriptively graphic and subject to the usual considerations of authorial bias, affords no real difficulty of interpretation for the purposes of this study.[74] Except for the mention of the erotic paintings and decorations and the illustrated sex manuals at hand in the emperor's quarters, there is little to indicate that his activities were in any way reflective of the kind of folk practices and beliefs that form the subject of the present investigation.[75]

On the other hand, ancient approaches to scientific analysis do tend to diverge widely, and it is only by comparing the textual testimony from such sources that popular attitudes toward male sexual-

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[74] The activities practiced by Tiberius to arouse his fading sex drives (*ut...deficientis libidines excitaret*) included both voyeurism (43) and pedophilia (44).

[75] The handbook of Elephantis, mentioned specifically by Suetonius, was one of many such works which purport to be instructional in nature but which ought properly to be classed as pornographic. In that sense they may be seen as possibly curative for impotence. Martial (*Ep.* 12.43) calls the works of Elephantis *molles libelli.* Cf. *Carmina Priapea* 4. The entire genre, presumably written by men under the guise of female authorship, was deemed suitable only for the morally weak and effeminized male or for insatiable women. See Parker, "Love's Body Anatomized," 90-111 and especially 98-99.

ity and toward social and personal complications associated with a diminished virility can be revealed. For example, those historical accounts that incorporate a component of folk belief into the narrative can make an important contribution to this discussion by recording popular perceptions about male sexual dysfunction and by affording a contrastive model to which similar information from contemporary medical sources may be compared. In this regard it is especially important to understand how popular sentiment surfaces in even those texts ordinarily considered solidly scientific in their approach to their subject matter. As G.E.R. Lloyd explains:

> Popular and traditional beliefs—including superstitions and 'magic'—were not superseded: they continued to be held not only (one presumes) by most Greeks but in particular by many highly articulate writers, and they can be exemplified in prominent exponents of ἱστορίη such as Herodotus. Moreover they can be said to grow or develop in a way analogous to the development of science and philosophy, in that—partly under the influence of the models provided by science and philosophy—they become elaborated and systematized, as was the case with dream interpretation and other forms of divination, with astrology and with 'alchemy.'[76]

Thus, as I demonstrate in the next chapter, an analytical collation of the Herodotean and Hippocratic accounts of the impotent Ἐναρεῖς of Scythia throws into sharp relief the two alternative ways of viewing the affliction and its attendant social attitudes and repercussions.[77]

The juxtaposition of these approaches is particularly important in determining the extent to which aspects of traditional belief persist in the literary record. Thus, in analyzing this interrelation between folk perception and a more formalized scientific approach in ancient texts, Lloyd has noted that there is a significant commingling of scientific assumption with popular belief; he has likewise demonstrated the manner in which the continued existence of this tension marked the ancient world and how it lasted well into later times:

> The establishment of science in Greece depended importantly on marking out the subject-matter, aims, and methods of rational inquiry from popular or traditional patterns of thought. But although many Greek scientists self-consciously contrast their own investigations with other, especially traditional, systems of belief they nevertheless often remain deeply influenced by such beliefs and in some cases may appear to us to do little more than attempt some rationalization of

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[76] G.E.R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience* (Cambridge: University Press, 1979), 227.

[77] Herodotus 1.105; *Airs Waters Places* 22. Cf. also the refutation of magic in the Hippocratic *On the Sacred Disease.*

> their basis...Ancient science is from the beginning strongly marked by the interplay between, on the one hand, the assimilation of popular assumptions, and, on the other, their critical analysis, exposure, and rejection, and this continues to be a feature of science to the end of antiquity and beyond.[78]

These considerations become especially significant in examining the (predominantly) prose scientific works that afford valuable glimpses into the workings of popular belief and its suppositions about sexuality and into how these became intertwined with more purely scientific information.

Among the most important sources that may be classed as scientific are the natural historical works of Aristotle and his student Theophrastus. They represent the more rational approach to natural history, where the term "rational" indicates only the application of human reason in a coherent manner and does not necessarily guarantee scientific veracity.[79] Works such as the former's *De generatione animalium* and *Historia animalium* are particularly illustrative of a popular tendency to assimilate the biology and social behavior of animals to human paradigms.[80] More significant in determining the extent to which folk belief and popular perception combine with scientific analysis are the references by Aristotle in his zoological treatises to the everyday sources of information such as farmers and the like.[81] Similar too is Theophrastus's mention of drug-sellers and root-cutters (φαρμακοπῶλαι καὶ οἱ ῥιζοτόμοι); his inquiring contact with these professional herbalists served as an important source of information about the sympathetic properties of plants in spite of his concerns about their overall accuracy.[82] A tradition of folkloric belief

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[78] G.E.R. Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology* (Cambridge: University Press, 1983),1.

[79] David J. Hufford, "Folk Medicine in Contemporary America," in *Herbal and Magical Medicine: Traditional Healing Today*, ed. James Kirkland, Holly F. Matthews, C. W. Sullivan III and Karen Baldwin (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 16: "Reasoning, including formal deductive logic, cannot guarantee truth. If assumptions, criteria for the admission of evidence and observations, differ, then the same kind of reasoning may lead to very different conclusions."

[80] Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology,* 2-3. Especially important is the tendency to see animal behavior in human terms and the role of the human as a model for zoological taxonomy. The late collections ascribed to Aristotle entitled *Problemata* and *De mirabilibus auscultationibus* also provide information about popular beliefs in a scientific framework.

[81] For example, Aristotle relates information from dairymen (οἱ νομεῖς) about cheese (*Historia animalium* 3.20 522a).

[82] On Aristotle's sources see Anthony Preus, *Science and Philosophy in Aristotle's Biological Works* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1975), 21-42. The most complete account of Theophrastus's contacts with and opinion of the root-cutters and drug-sellers is at *Historia plantarum* 9.8.5-6. On this see Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology,* 120-125 and especially 121-122; John Scarborough, "Theophrastus on Herbals and Herbal Remedies," *Journal of the History of Biology* 11.2 (1978), 355-356, 359-360 and "Phar-

is similarly evident in the other works of Theophrastus, most notably the *De lapidibus*. This work, an early account of the properties of various stones which is more rationally based than its successors, uses information drawn both from popular notions in the domestic sphere and from reports originating in the newly conquered reaches of the early Hellenistic world.[83] In fact, relying on information from the noted physician and anatomist Diocles in his account of the fabled stone λυγγούριον (*De lapidibus* 28-29), Theophrastus demonstrates how he combined highly regarded authorities with popular accounts.[84]

Other major writers on natural history and related fields also contribute valuable information for understanding how popular beliefs and magical traditions find their way into rationally scientific expositions. For example, in the first century the Greek herbalist Dioscorides and his Roman contemporary Pliny the Elder each investigated much of the same material and depended on many of the same sources, resulting in a substantial number of correspondences between their works. Yet significant differences exist between the two authors, and these serve to demonstrate clearly the contrast between the disciplined approach of Dioscorides and Pliny's encyclopedic though less discriminating approach to the material.[85]

Most importantly, the methods of the two writers differ markedly. For instance, Dioscorides did not in general mention his sources while Pliny made a concerted effort to do so.[86] Dioscorides did not

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macology," 146-151; and John Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy and Medicine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), 5-6. The practice of herb-gathering still exists, on which see George M. Foster and Barbara G. Anderson, *Medical Anthropology* (New York: Knopf, 1978), 104-110 and the account of Don Yoder, *Discovering American Folklife: Studies in Ethnic, Religious, and Regional Culture* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1990), 92: "In addition to the women of the average American household who gathered and cultivated herbs, there were sometimes herbal specialists in the community, usually men, the 'tarb doctors' of the Ozarks, who gathered herbs widely—professionally, one may say. Sometimes, too, special occupational classes, like shepherds, had herbal as well as magical cures for their animals and their colleagues."

[83] D. E. Eichholz, ed., *Theophrastus: De lapidibus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 5. Theophrastus's dates are c. 370-288/5 BC The exotic tales and accounts of wonderworking, especially from the eastern edges of the Greek world, were a major element in the lapidary genre.

[84] Earle R. Caley and John F. Richards, *Theophrastus On Stones* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1956), 113-116.

[85] The account that follows relies largely on the introductory discussion in Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 14-28.

[86] For example, while Dioscorides may have used Theophrastus, the material more likely came through the indirect testimony of Sextius Niger or Crateuas; the question is still open. Pliny, on the other hand, lists his sources in *Naturalis Historia* 1. The literary character of his listing is noteworthy. See Lloyd, *Science, Folklore and Ideology*, 2-3, 135-136. Pliny's essential reliance on Greek sources rather than Latin (by a two to one ratio) on many topics is somewhat surprising given his practical, es-

often include the irrational or magic elements found in his sources; and when he did, he qualified his inclusions. Pliny, on the other hand, was less disciplined in his treatment of this kind of information, and he readily included a significant number of those magic and folkloric elements that may be considered representative of contemporary practices.[87] This methodological dichotomy between the investigations of the Greek herbalist and those of the Roman polymath was actually a result of the real difference between the underlying intentions of the two writers. Dioscorides sought to fill the voids left by earlier investigators and emphasized accuracy over innovation; Pliny attempted to assemble and to record a wide range of information of magical and therapeutic benefit, the description of which would provide further depth and scope to his examination of the natural world.[88]

Dioscorides, moreover, chose to incorporate his own personal observations and experiences into his accounts of medicinal substances and added to this the consensus of people with whom he had exchanged information; Pliny was more the encyclopedic researcher drawing from one source and then another, a practice which was dictated by the enormous task he had set for himself and by the weight of authority he ascribed to his predecessors.[89] Thus compared, two of the major sources of information for this study stand as testimony to the existence of a body of popular or traditional knowledge approachable in different ways by two contemporary writers, each of whose attitude often dictated how such material should be analyzed, presented, discounted, or ignored. Nonetheless, it is im-

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sentially Roman approach to the compilation of his subject matter; on medical subjects the ratio is even higher. For other subjects, like timber, aquatic creatures, and flowers, Latin writers predominate. See Roger French, *Ancient Natural History* (London: Routledge, 1994), 219-220.

[87] In general see Jerry Stannard, "Medicinal Plants and Folk Remedies in Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 4.1 (1982), 3-5. Stannard defends Pliny's inclusion of a wide range of attitudes by comparing him to the modern anthropologist who reports all of what he is told from informants. The verbs *aiunt, dicitur*, and *traditur* are adduced as evidence of Pliny's attempt to distance himself from his less rational sources.

[88] Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 18-19 on the preface to the *De materia medica*. Cf. also 23: "His method, he suggested, would provide the framework for new, expanded knowledge in the future."

[89] Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 16: "Dioscorides said that his method was to research the usages among those who had written on the subject, to compare the accounts in order to determine what was general knowledge, and to confirm the usages through talking with people about their experiences." Cf. 19: "He contributed his own experiences with plants, drugs, and their manufacture, which he gathered from his travels and from talking with diverse peoples." See also Pliny the Younger *Epistulae* 3.5 and Lloyd, *Science, Folklore, Ideology*, 147-149.

portant for the modern researcher to acknowledge that such knowledge was known to exist and that, like fossiliferous beds of ancient strata, it still now crops out in identifiable exposures throughout the remains of the ancient intellectual landscape.

As might be expected, ancient medical testimony also provides material useful for the present investigation. Yet like the natural historical works discussed above, medical writings are also subject to a wide range of contemporary approaches and to individual authorial intent. In addition, both subsequent interpretation by medical commentators and the vagaries of survival affect the usefulness of these works. As a result, there exist considerable difficulties inherent in any modern assessment of their theoretical and technical underpinnings. Indeed, the very historiography of ancient medicine itself demonstrates the difficulties of the situation; for as Wesley Smith has reminded us, modern investigators are often frustrated by the fragmentary nature and the general unreliability of the evidence:

> What the ancients left is meager and of varying quality. People in antiquity who approached the history of medicine often did so by indirection, for example, in idealization of the past, in polemic, or in self-justification. Anything like systematic collection of facts and writing about medical history came relatively late, in imitation of other kinds of historical writing. By then much desirable material had disappeared, so that fair and accurate reconstruction of the past, always difficult, was, perhaps, impossible.[90]

Nonetheless, many ancient medical texts from Greco-Roman antiquity serve as valuable sources of information for this study. For example, since each of the predominantly anonymous treatises that make up the *Corpus Hippocraticum* are relatively narrowly focused, these writings afford useful information about specific physiological problems. The contextual environment of the majority of these writings, moreover, is related directly to their contemporary Greek culture, making them a valuable investigative tool by which we may ascertain ancient attitudes to medical matters proper.[91] More importantly, these diverse writings also afford insights about popular beliefs associated with particular medical difficulties, often by providing a well-defined rational background against which traditional concepts of cause and cure may be thrown into relief.

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[90] Wesley D. Smith, "Notes on Ancient Medical Historiography," *The Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 63.1 (Spring 1989), 73.

[91] Smith, "Notes," 87-88. The *Corpus Hippocraticum,* however, underwent considerable literary editing and revision in the Roman era. Cf. 107-108.

Medical writings from the Roman era are equally important in uncovering information on procedures based on the rational paradigm and in ascertaining the existing tensions between the scientific and the popular. On the one hand, the works of highly regarded medical men like Galen and the industrious compilations from later centuries by Oribasius, Paulus, and Aetius constitute a corpus of reliable medical information since despite their late dates, the latter did rely primarily on earlier rational authorities. As a result, they too should be considered still within the broad confines of rational medicine and science.[92] Like their Hippocratic counterparts, these texts attest the long tradition of rational medical thought and provide a comparative means to measure the conceptual span between scientific and folk belief. On the other hand, traditional concepts of cause and cure do appear even in otherwise rational sources, and such direct evidence sheds valuable light on popular practices. For instance, in the mid-first century AD Celsus, a reliably rational writer who not only presents a history of medicine from earliest times down to his own day but also analyzes the differences between the various sectarian issues in medicine, includes in his *De medicina* a number of popular remedies drawn from the folk medicine of contemporary Italy.[93] Other medical writers such as Scribonius Largus, like Celsus a first century AD empiricist, and the third century Serenus both incorporate popular elements into their works as well. Yet even more appropriate for determining the influence of magic and popular lore in medical writings are prescriptive tracts such as the fifth-century *De medicamentis* of Marcellus Empiricus, a work which bridges the gulf between rational science and the compilation of folkloric materials reliant on sympathetic magic.[94] For the most part, then, medical writings, especially if firmly grounded in the rational approach, ultimately offer less in the way of direct information useful for this in-

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[92] Oribasius, physician to the emperor Julian, compiled material from many earlier writers including Dioscorides and Galen; Aetius, probably an official under Justinian, complements Oribasius by drawing from other sources; Paul of Aegina in the early seventh century drew from Hippocrates, Celsus, Galen, and others. See T. Clifford Allbutt, *Greek Medicine in Rome* (New York: Macmillan: 1921; reprint, New York: Benjamin Blom, 1970), 277-78; 413-14.

[93] The history of medicine appears in the *Proemium*, on which see Smith, "Notes," 74-79. For the popular Italian remedies recounted by Celsus, see W. H. Jones, "Ancient Roman Folk Medicine," *The Journal of the History of Medicine* 12 (1957), 464-465. Jones (465-468) uses the treatments of epilepsy among five writers, both Greek and Roman, as an example of the tension between the scientific and popular approaches.

[94] Marcellus drew from Scribonius Largus (first century AD) and Pliny, both of whom tend toward the superstitious, as well as from local Gallic traditions familar to him. See Allbutt, *Greek Medicine*, 384.

vestigation than do those texts that more clearly partake of traditional, popular, and magical elements.

In contrast to those strictly rational medical writings that may be seen to cohere by virtue of their shared philosophical viewpoint, traditional and popular texts constitute a large and diffuse category whose subject matter consists primarily of folk medicine, science and philosophy, magic (with its attendant subgroups of erotic magic and curses), and even alchemy. Upon even a cursory examination it becomes evident that this mass of often conflicting information and outright supposition represents the kind of undisciplined and credulous approach encountered to a somewhat lesser degree in Pliny. Preeminent among the writers whose output is characterized by such (at least assumed) credulity is Nicander of Colophon (fl. 220 BC) whose *Theriaca* and *Alexipharmaca* treat extensively of poisons and remedies derived from various natural sources, animal and otherwise.[95] The fact that little of Nicander's didactic output represents original research but comprises rather a compendium of paraphrased borrowings from his predecessors enhances its value as a testimony to common beliefs and popular concepts current in the Hellenistic period.[96] His influence upon later writers, moreover, was considerable, and he stands as a major element in the literary transmission of a large body of popular, magic, and folkloric concepts. One such author who owes much to the literary tradition of poisons and remedies is Philumenus, who borrowed information liberally but also cited some of his sources by name.[97] His Greek work, *De venenatis animalibus*, was written in the second century AD and is a compilation of traditional information from Apollodorus, Nicander, and others.[98] The text of the *De venenatis animalibus* itself contains thirty-seven chapters that detail individual treatments of both a prophylactic and curative character, derived from natural sources and marked by medicinal, dietary, and magical elements. Yet another compiler of traditional lore, Aelian (c. AD 170-235), produced a collection of sto-

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[95] Questions of the date of Nicander and subject matter of the two poems are discussed in A.S.F. Gow and A. F. Scholfield, eds., *Nicander: the Poems and Poetical Fragments* (Cambridge: University Press, 1953;. reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1979) 3-8 and 18-25.

[96] Apollodorus seems to have been the primary source for Nicander and through him for other later writers; see Gow and Scholfield, *Nicander: Poems*, 18 with further bibliography there.

[97] E.g., Archigenes, Apollonius, and Straton. See further Allbutt, *Greek Medicine*, 382-383.

[98] His popularity among later writers ensured the continuation of the tradition, as a glance at Wellmann's apparatus to his 1908 Teubner shows. The medical writers discussed above appear with some regularity along with others like Ps. Discorides. Wellmann's text does the same for his edition of Dioscorides.

ries involving animals, the *De natura animalium,* drawn from earlier Greek writers as well as from the works of contemporaries.[99] These moralistic accounts, arranged in a random manner to hold the reader's attention, enjoyed considerable contemporary popularity, no doubt because of the author's stated intention to entertain as well as instruct. The tales afford interesting and profitable insights into the way natural history was perceived and accepted into popular culture by Aelian's reading public. This aspect of literary reception is particularly relevant for the examination of the literary texts treated in Chapter Five.

Other, even more arcane texts of a decidedly magical character provide sources for information by closely linking popular ideas about sexuality with natural objects and the sympathetic interactions between them. Prominent among these are a number of quasi-scientific texts that transmit an extensive body of lore about stones and magical amulets, whose sympathetic power derives from their original constitution, from an alteration by natural or, more ordinarily, by human means, or from contact with other efficacious magical objects.[100] The character and content of these works encompass a broad spectrum, however; and while at one extremity scientific and rational sensibilities seem to predominate, at the other, a markedly literary sentiment mingles the magical with the mystical. Thus a work like Theophrastus's *De lapidibus* exemplifies the former extreme in its attempt to present information on stones with material drawn from the Aristotelian tradition (the *Meteorologica*) although, as has been pointed out, it too does not stand entirely devoid of popular and magical elements.[101] The fifth book of Dioscorides' *De materia medica* in its treatment of stones and metals (5.123-150) shares this rationalist approach; and, because of the author's reasoned and disciplined examination and arrangement, the entire work stands as an example of scientific excellence.[102] A marked difference is apparent in other contemporary works such as the lapidary of Damigeron-Evax and that of Socrates and Dionysius. Both works are dated to the early Empire and perpetuate the lapidary tradition but with the noticeable addition of those irrational elements typical of the con-

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[99] His *Varia historia* exhibits similar attitudes. For a full discussion of Aelian, see the introduction to A. F. Scholfield's Loeb edition of *De natura animalium,* Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958-1959), xi-xxix. The present account follows this.

[100] These concepts are explained in more detail in Chapter Two.

[101] Above, p. 51.

[102] Dioscorides was the inheritor of a long intellectual tradition and was an innovator in the organization and arrangement of his material. See Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy,* 14-24.

tinuing Hellenistic intellectual revisionism.[103] These, like other late handbooks on magical activity and substances, serve important functions: they collect traditions and practices from previous periods, and they serve as topographic maps, as it were, through the lacunose landscape of earlier beliefs and popular traditions.

Though not specifically concerned with stones, one especially informative and influential work of this type is the *Kyranides.* This work from the early Empire incorporates Hellenistic material from both earlier and contemporary popular traditions; it is a good example of the medico-religious nature of circulated texts.[104] Similar religious, medical, magical, and philosophical dispositions mark works of later date like the *Orphic Lithika* ('Ορφέως Λιθικά), which represents the absolute melding of sympathetic elements into a versified literary framework.[105] These two important works, along with others that exhibit the predominant attitudes of the lapidary tradition by either sharing contemporaneous sensibilities or, like the medieval *De lapidibus* by Marbode of Rennes, by deriving material from them, are examples of the kind of literary artifact that best reveals the intersection of erotic magic and its sympathetic impact upon sexuality.[106] Yet despite the inclusion of much popular material, these works for the most part may have enjoyed only a relatively small circulation among a limited audience of the learned, the credulous, the magicians, and the practitioners of theurgy.

To evaluate popular and common practices associated with matters of sexuality another related class of subliterary artifacts provides insight into less easily recognized popular attitudes. These include

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[103] Such literature is typically put in a class called φυσικά. On the writings about stones (*lithica*) in general, see Theodor Hopfner, "Λιθικά," *RE* 13.747-769. See also Max Wellmann, "Damigeron," *RE* 4.2.2055-2056; "Euax," *RE* 6.1.849-850; V. Rose, "Damigeron *De Lapidibus,*" *Hermes* 9 (1875), 471-491; Robert Halleux and Jacques Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs* (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1985) for texts, translations, and pertinent commentary. Lloyd (*Magic, Reason, Experience,* 4-6), in discussing Dodds's *The Greeks and the Irrational,* suggests fluctuating periods of interest in the magical and mystical; he further posits a period of revision and reaction in the aftermath of the scientific brilliance of the fifth century.

[104] See Maryse Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet* (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1987), 7 with further bibliography at n. 4.

[105] Valuable introductory material to text is found in Halleux and Schamp, *Lapidaires,* 3-57. The work has been dated toward the end of the fourth century AD. It is indicative of the increase in magical practices and theurgy from the second century onward mentioned by Lloyd (*Magic, Reason, Experience,* 5) and evidenced in texts like the *Satyrica,* the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, and Heliodorus's *Ethiopika,* for example.

[106] Text and translation of Marbode in John Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes (1035-1123), De lapidibus* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977). Nonnos's fifth-century epic *Dionysiaca* shares sensibilties common to the period as well.

curse tablets and textual remains such as magical papyri, both of which surface in widely divergent cultural contexts.[107] Since they represent the sincere expression of ordinary individuals concerning the anxieties and aspirations of daily life, much information can be gleaned from them about the character of natural historical and magical concepts interwoven with specific perceptions of sexuality among the population.[108] These texts, moreover, demonstrate an assertion of the individual voice over the controlling factors of life, be they of magico-natural, interpersonal, or societal origin.[109] The study of other material artifacts like inscribed amulets, of more limited application in this investigation, does provide valuable insights into texts like the *Kyranides*.[110]

Lastly, material artifacts, sculptural and pictorial, provide an extra-literary basis for appreciating the cultural environment in which popular concepts about sexuality existed. Purely decorative items with a sexual content are well attested from all periods in Greco-Roman antiquity, and those associated with the phallus frequently serve an additional apotropaic or prophylactic function.[111] Other artifacts of a sexual nature were designed for more specific uses, particularly as votive offerings, and these attest to a widespread popularity of a curative approach to disease and injury based on divine intervention. Yet although a wide assortment of votive objects are found at healing shrines, it is particularly difficult to determine with certainty the precise ailments for which these offerings were intended. Such is also the case with anatomical votives which represent human

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[107] Collections of this material include, for example, A. Audollent, *Defixionum Tabellae* (Paris: Fontemoing, 1904); K. Preisendanz et al., eds., *Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die griechischen Zauberpapyri*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973-1974); H. D. Betz, ed., *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation Including the Demotic Spells* (Chicago: University Press, 1986); R. W. Daniel and F. Maltomini, eds., *Supplementum Magicum* 2 vols. (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990–1992); Marvin Meyer and Richard Smith, eds., *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power* (San Francisco: Harper, 1994); and Marvin Meyer and Paul Mirecki, eds., *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995).

[108] Two recent publications have made significant contributions toward understanding the cultural coordinates of both the texts and material artifacts of magical character: Gager, *Curse Tablets*, and Faraone and Obbink, *Magika Hiera*.

[109] Gager, *Curse Tablets*, 24: "[*defixiones*] worked in ways that could not be controlled by the legal, social, and political centers of ancient society. Indeed, at times, they stood in direct opposition to those centers." See also Richard Gordon, "Aelian's Peony: the Location of Magic in Graeco-Roman Tradition," *Comparative Criticism* 9 (1982), 59-95.

[110] E.g., Campbell Bonner in *Studies in Magical Amulets Chiefly Graeco-Egyptian* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950).

[111] See, for example, Michael Grant and Antonia Mulas, *Eros in Pompeii* (New York: William Morris, 1975) and Catherine Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome* (London: Colonnade, 1982).

genitalia. For example, at the healing shrine of Ponte di Nona in the vicinity of Rome, terracotta *ex votos* of male genitals either may represent dedicatory gifts intended to promote the cure of a wide range of symptoms recorded from contemporary medical literature or may simply be offerings of gratitude for the birth of a child.[112] Whether the dedication of any of these represents a plea for a cure for impotence may never be determined. Nonetheless, such evidence both attests the perceived role that divinities played in the curative process and supports the literary and subliterary documentation for divine intervention.

In summary, then, the evidence itself, be it the incorporation of folkloric pharmacological material into Homeric epic or the credulous and self-conscious versification of the *Orphic Lithika*, should be examined (or re-examined) as the actual bearer of the tradition, the cultural matrix as it were, for a fossilized core of persistent belief. Thus each bit of evidence, whether projecting exposed from the cultivated landscape of drama, washed out from the precipitous cliffs of invective, or deposited in the obscure strata of magical texts, presents one equally important facet to the overall picture of an identifiable belief system that supposes an identifiable network of visual and sympathetic interaction effecting male sexual dyfunction as a magically produced affliction. Considered as a means of cultural expression, moroever, each of the sources provides its own particular insight to the thematic incorporation of male sexual dysfunction and its social and interpersonal ramifications.

The extent to which each bit of evidence contributes to the investigation will become apparent as it is encountered. But before questions of lore, literature, and liberation can be explored, it is necessary to examine the presumptions of science and the popular concept of *sympatheia* (συμπάθεια) that underlie the belief systems. Only with an understanding of how specific conceptual underpinnings of the evidence contribute to the entire construct does it become clear how these perceptions coalesce with and inform the cultural and literary matrices within which the thematic presentation of male sexual dysfunction is embedded. The following chapter, therefore, is devoted to an analysis of both the rational framework and the popular cultural base by which further investigation must necessarily be supported and from which an elaboration of such concepts can begin.

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[112] Ralph Jackson, *Doctors and Diseases in the Roman Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 160-161. See also Johns, *Sex or Symbol*, 57-59 with fig. 43.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGIES AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

In the last chapter the survey and analysis of the ancient testimony demonstrated how the wide variety of both literary and non-literary artifacts can reveal a good deal about attitudes toward sexuality and impotence in particular and about popular traditions and their convergence with magic. One significant result of such a directed investigation is an enhanced realization of the persistence of basic popular concepts and of the many and varied ways they find expression in literary texts from the esteemed to the lowly. In fact, I would argue that based on analogies to literary, scientific, and technological trends in the ancient world, such notions and associations formed a consistency of belief in the sympathetic influences of magic; that they were firmly rooted in the popular imagination; and that they had a long life and a wide dispersion. In this chapter I offer a paradigm for understanding the persistence of such concepts and demonstrate how folk belief and popular imagination form the contextual background for works both scientific and literary.

One way of looking at how the literary record testifies to the existence of a substrate of popular belief is by understanding how the organization of that belief system exhibits similarities to other cultural constructs. In the case of a popular belief in sympathetic influences, one such analogy may be drawn to Francis Cairns's study of the generic classifications of ancient poetry.[1] Now although much of his documentary support derives from a late rhetorical source, Cairns does clearly demonstrate how the framework of the poetic genres remained an organizing and defining force in Greek and Roman literature from the earliest to the latest periods.[2] Nevertheless, his comments on genre, if extrapolated to encompass ele-

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[1] Francis Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1972).

[2] Cairns, *Generic Composition*, 31: "The theory...is that the whole of classical poetry is written in accordance with sets of rules of the various genres, rules which can be discovered by a study of the surviving literature." Cairns, however, by relying on the ideas of the rhetor Menander of Laodicea (third century AD), leaves himself open to the charge of imposing upon earlier material an overly rigid organization that may be unwarranted by the material itself.

ments in the larger cultural landscape, establish a foundation for understanding the way the popular conception of sympathetic influences may be reconstructed:

> Some development did indeed take place in the ancient world over the eleven hundred or so years between the appearance of the Homeric poems and the disappearance of Latin as a spoken language. But in a very real sense antiquity was in comparison with the nineteenth and twentieth centuries a time-free zone.[3]

Thus, while a great deal of caution should be observed about drawing exact parallels, I propose that it is quite possible to see how a system of analogy and symbolic influence among the natural world, magic, and sexuality closely parallels Cairns's concept of generic structuring in its continuity, its longevity, and its sociocultural location.[4]

There are other models for the temporal persistence and geographical dispersion of such a belief system as well. For instance, despite centuries of the exploitation of Mediterranean forests for shipbuilding, the ancient and subsequent technology of timber harvesting changed little.[5] In fact, it may be said with little exaggeration that the Greek theoretical basis for technology remained essentially unchanged except for a substantial contribution of practical application afforded by the Romans.[6] Moreover, based on the model of a relatively static level of certain technologies in the ancient world, a system of belief can be seen to have remained essentially intact in sustaining its own existence over a long period. As such it thrives on a perceived interdependency of sympathetic influences and powers repeatedly energized by human belief, and as Winkler has pointed out, this kind of information was spread throughout the population at a level unlikely to leave any substantial traces in higher literary genres.[7] For purposes of comparison, the unearthing of fossilized

[3] Cairns, *Generic Composition*, 32.

[4] Cf. J. E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, 2nd ed., trans. Jack Sage (New York: Philosophical Library, 1971), xv: "We should like to emphasize that when we refer, in the various passages quoted and paraphrased, to 'tradition' or 'traditional doctrine', we are referring only to continuity—conscious or unconscious—and the coherence of a system, as much in the dimension of space as in that of time."

[5] For the former see Russell Meiggs, *Trees and Timber in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982; reprint, 1984), 4: "Timber-felling and conversion underwent very little radical change between the Bronze Age and the nineteenth century, and though there were regional diversities of which we know very little, even the development of tools, which has not been studied here in detail, seems to have followed a roughly common pattern."

[6] J. G. Landels, *Engineering in the Ancient World* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1978), 186. Note also the account of steam power, 28-31.

[7] See Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*, 72-82, especially 80.

superstition and ritual embedded in the ceremonies of a hierarchically organized religio-cultural construct of the modern age attests to the appeal and resultant persistence of such traditional concepts. Ancient practices having to do with the phallus make this quite clear in the ceremonies of southern Italy honoring St. Cosmo, whose influence in re-invigorating male genitals was secured by the application of a special oil onto the affected organ. The saint's own most influential physical part, moreover, euphemistically referred to as the "Great Toe," was formerly exposed on the Feast of Sts. Cosmas and Damian in the town of Isneria at least as recently as the late eighteenth century.[8] A further indication of the traditional nature of this reverence is that votive offerings in the form of wax phalli could be purchased on site and donated to the saint much in the very same way that *ex voto* offerings had been given to divinities at healing shrines in the pagan past.[9]

That such perceptions could themselves become systematized is entirely likely; indeed, it has been suggested that among the ancients the very development of a belief system based on natural and sympathetic influences tended to follow the organized model of philosophy and the sciences.[10] Useful aspects of the latter, for example, were often incorporated into an organized system of belief for its own purposes.[11] A concrete example of how this kind of belief system does persist over time and space may be seen in a long-held reliance on popular forms of magical intervention such as curse tablets, whose existence spans far-reaching cultural and chronological boundaries.[12] It is clear, then, that both the longevity and stability of a given belief

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[8] See the fascinating account of Richard Payne Knight, *The Worship of Priapus*, in *Sexual Symbolism* (New York: Julian Press, 1957), 13-23.

[9] Johns, *Sex or Symbol*, 24-25 with figs. 10 and 11.

[10] Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience*, 6; see also 27. One could profitably compare this evolution to the way astrology, both ancient and modern, relies on an intricate interdependence of celestial objects. Manilian astrology represents perhaps the best ancient example; see G. P. Goold, ed. and trans., *Manilius: Astronomica*, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), xli-l. For the systematization of astrology, see also Barton, *Ancient Astronomy*, 86-113. There is, no doubt, a similar developmental structuring currently at work in much of the so-called "New Age" mentality; such phenomena as "harmonic convergences," for example, cannot but have special significance for adherents especially because of the concept of sympathetic alignments.

[11] See Alexander Jones, "The Place of Astronomy in Roman Egypt," in *The Sciences in Greco-Roman Society*, ed. Timothy Barnes (Edmonton: Academic Printing & Publishing, 1994), 37: of the three divisions of ancient astronomy (observation, theory, prediction), astrology as practiced in Roman Egypt appropriated only the latter for its own purposes to the almost complete neglect of the other two.

[12] For the close simliarity of *defixiones* from earliest to more recent times, see Gager, *Curse Tablets*, 25-30.

system were very real cultural factors, and that the range of evidence extends from the earliest literary periods to the very end of the ancient Greco-Roman world and beyond. In the specific perceptions among the ancients about the causes and cures for sexual dysfunction, moreover, the reliance upon such paradigms of belief follow these outlines closely and exhibit recognizable features across a broad spectrum of the existing evidence. This systemization of belief is likewise reflected in the various approaches to the causes of impotence and in the models for its cure. In addition, the disparate ways in which the modern world intersects with the ancient in the treatment of the affliction exhibit striking similarities, and an examination of these intersections leads to a deeper appreciation of the general similarities between the two worlds.

Perhaps the closest point of contact lies in the manner in which each approach applies scientific and folkloric models to the problem of male sexual dysfunction. For example, on the one hand the modern paradigm relies heavily on current advances both in medicine and in psychology, to which the ancient approach has its equivalences, as I later demonstrate. This constitutes the rational or scientific approach to the cause and the cure for the affliction. On the other hand, the modern approach shares with its ancient counterpart another attitude to the problem which echoes the perceptions and methods of the distant past and which resonates with a perceptual reality rooted more deeply in traditions of folk medicine and magic. Consequently, a brief overview of these two approaches will illustrate points both of similarity and of divergence.

Modern approaches to male sexual dysfunction partake of contemporary cultural sensibilities and an openness about sexuality combined with advanced medical and psychiatric methodology. According to modern medical science, the causes of male sexual dysfunction may be divided into two broadly based categories: the psychological and the organic or physiological. According to the current definition, moreover, sexual dysfunction encompasses more physiological reactions than only a simple failure to achieve erection. Three other areas of male sexual response may also be involved: emission, ejaculation, and orgasm.[13] As a result, what qualifies in

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[13] Emission is the process of secreting the sperm and attendant fluids; ejaculation, the forceful expulsion of the secreted sperm; and orgasm, the final activity that combines the first two and causes a wide range of physiologic activity. See James Smolev, "Male Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology," 37 and Ira Sharlip, "Diagnosis and Management of Organic Male Sexual Dysfunction," 297, both in *Men's Reproductive Health*, ed. Janice M. Swanson and Katherine A. Forrest (New York: Springer, 1984).

general terms as male sexual failure actually consists of a complex range of reactions to a variety of inhibitionary circumstances. It can, moreover, involve these factors either alone or in combination; and as a result of current methodological advances made in the diagnosis of the causes of male sexual dysfunction, recent studies have indicated that occurrences of impotence may be ascribed to organic causes at a much higher rate than previously acknowledged.[14] In general, then, medical evaluation is now recommended as a first approach unless there exists sufficient reason to suspect problems in an individual's sexual history.[15] In fact, organic causes of male sexual dysfunction are quite numerous and include the effects of localized disease, neurologic abnormalities and pharmacologic reactions.[16] The curative paradigm for these kinds of problems incorporates either surgical or medicative remedies.[17] The psychogenic causes of impotence are more difficult to diagnose, and they require a more sensitive investigation into each individual case.[18] For both sexes sexual stimulation plays a major role as an arousal mechanism; and while both somatic and psychic stimulation are essential, the male response depends primarily on the latter. As a result, difficulties can arise in erectile function if stimuli involved in the process of arousal become

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[14] Sharlip, "Diagnosis," 297: "Current diagnostic techniques have invalidated the older concept that erectile dysfunction is psychogenic in 90 percent of cases. New organic diagnostic categories are now able to explain the cause of sexual dysfunction in many patients formerly thought to be in idiopathic or psychogenic categories."

[15] Erection proper is considered the result of a combination of the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems, but the specific mechanisms are still unclear. Discussion and diagram in Peter V. Taberner, *Aphrodisiacs: The Science and the Myth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985) 145-147 and fig. 6.2.

[16] Complete list in Sharlip, "Diagnosis and Management," 298 (= Table 17.1). For drugs as causes for sexual failure, see John C. Buffum, "Sexual and Reproductive Effects of Pharmacologic Agents," in Swanson and Forrest, *Men's Reproductive Health,* 179-181. Chief drug groups in Taberner, *Aphrodisiacs,* 145: "narcotic analgesics, alcohol, amphetamines, atropine, benzodiazepines, digitalis, guanethidine, mono-amine oxidase inhibitors, methyl-DOPA, phenothiazines, reserpine and nicotine." Cf. 239-242.

[17] These are treated in Taberner, *Aphrodisiacs,* chap. 8: "Drugs Used Clinically as Aphrodisiacs." Some of these are derived from vegetable sources (e.g., yohimbine from the bark of the West African tree *Pausinystalia yohimbe* of the Madder family [Rubiaceae]) and have been marketed under such names as Afrodex and Potensan. Other substances that block the peptide hormone prolactin, Bromocriptine and *L*-dihydrophenylalanine (*L*-DOPA), have been shown to have considerably less effect than has been announced in the popular press. See 224-231. Not surprisingly, the marketing of such products has now reached the Internet where sites like the Joy Luck Herbal Garden (http://www.joyluck.com/index.htm) and UPNATEM (http://www.oznet.com/upnatem/index.html) offer a selection of herbally based teas, tablets, and pills said to remedy impotence.

[18] See Joseph Nowinski, "Male Socialization and Men's Sexual Malaise," in Swanson and Forrest, *Men's Reproductive Health,* 285-295.

routine or if interest flags. Closely connected to inadequate arousal in the incidence of male sexual dysfunction is the other major psychogenic cause: performance anxiety. Through popular misconceptions that most men need minimal stimulation to achieve sexual arousal, anxiety is often incorrectly considered the primary cause of erectile difficulty. In the modern model the appropriate treatment for male sexual dysfunction caused by psychogenic factors is based in counselling and behavioral alteration.[19]

Yet in addition to the clinically valid medical or psychological treatments for impotence discussed above, a number of substances have been considered efficacious for stimulating sexual desire, for restoring a diminished sex drive, or for specifically promoting erection. These most often include certain treatments whose efficacy (it is claimed) stems from medicinally or nutritionally based "miracle" ingredients. Marginally scientific at best, the alleged composition of these remedies is often buttressed by vague associations with medically sound investigation and data or with fancifully efficacious ingredients. Furthermore, these supposed cures are frequently considered effective because of folk beliefs that derive their perceived powers from the exotic origins of the substances involved or from the traditional herbal practices associated with their use. The most common folk remedies of this type in use today are divided into those that are internally introduced, primarily through ingestion, and those that are applied externally in the form of salves or powders, this despite the once-popular surgical introduction of both animal and human testicular material into a patient's own system for sexual rejuvenation.[20] In actual use both internal and external methods of application enjoy considerable popularity. Evidence of the latter is often encountered in the advertising pages of sexually oriented magazines where "love cremes" promise sexual success. The former method, however, is more popular, and it consists of ingesting stimulants of all varieties including preparations of animal-derived substances, herbal compositions, and vitamins, all of which may be taken in tablet form. According to the popular press, moreover, cer-

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[19] For behavioral approaches see Jack S. Annon, "Simple Behavioral Treatment of Sexual Problems," in Swanson and Forrest, *Men's Reproductive Health,* 326-333.

[20] Early attempts at surgical introduction of testicular material were made by researchers such as Vornoff, Stanley, and Steinach. Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Creeping Man" uses the contemporary experiments and discoveries of the Viennese doctor Steinach as a thematic element. Cf. J. C. Praeger and Albert Silverstein, "Lowenstein of Prague," *Baker Street Journal* 23 (1973), 220-227. Injection was the preferred method of introduction in the case of procaine (also known under the names Gerovital, Gerontex, and Sex-ex among others). Taberner, *Aphrodisiacs* 150-155 and 87-92.

tain stimulating foods are deemed quite powerful in this regard, and word of mouth testimony has claimed remarkable efficacy for these as well.[21]

In classical antiquity, any actual awareness of psychogenic causes for male sexual dysfunction or any attempts at remedies based on currently understood psychological factors were nonexistent. This absence constitutes the major difference between the modern and the ancient approach to the problem. However, at this point I propose that the widespread perception of a magical or divine influence capable of circumventing the ordinary operations of the natural world and deemed a cause or cure for impotence should be considered the ancient equivalent of those psychogenic causes outlined earlier. In proposing these conceptual parallels between modern and ancient sensibilities, I consider ancient theories and practice about impotence to be divided into two basic approaches to cause and cure: the somatic and the supernatural.[22] Accordingly, this division corresponds precisely to current theories that posit a systematized model for folk illnesses, differentiating them into "natural" and "unnatural" categories.[23] According to this theoretical model, the basis

[21] The story of Sicilian Geno Garibaldi's sexual potency as a result of his increased intake of garlic was reported in "Sexy oldster, 87, says: 'Garlic keeps me young and virile...& I've got 153 kids to prove it!'" no page number (*The Sun*, Jan. 29, 1991 [personal letter and photocopy provided by David Stern of The Garlic Seed Foundation, December 27,1996]). According to the story, a hospital cleaning woman informed Garibaldi of the power of garlic after doctor's attempts to cure his sterility had failed. In the same communication Stern also reports that he knows of an individual who claims that a garlic salve applied to the penis enables him to perform for "up to four hours."

[22] I take the word "supernatural" in general terms according to the definition in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, ed. Philip B. Gove (Springfield: Merriam-Webster, 1993), def. 1a: "of, belonging to, having refrence to or proceeding from an order of existence beyond the physical universe that is observable and capable of being experienced by ordinary means." More specifically, see Hufford, *Belief Word Tools*, 28 (capitals original): "Referring to an order that is objectively real, qualitatively different from the everyday material world, that interacts with this world in certain ways, and that includes persons... This definition depends on the old sense of NATURAL, meaning NATURE (i.e., the physical, temporal world) rather than meaning 'everything,' or meaning *normal*. SUPERNATURAL in this sense is outside NATURE, and it may or may not be *normal*." To which may be added (Hufford, "Experience-Centered Analysis," 56): "The exact nature of the supernatural domain, its interactions with the ordinary world, and the persons it contains are left entirely open in this definition."

[23] A paradigmatic explanation of folk medical systems appears in Holly F. Matthews, "Doctors and Root Doctors: Patients Who Use Both," in *Herbal and Magical Medicine: Traditional Healing Today*, ed. James Kirkland, Holly Matthews, C. W. Sullivan III, and Karen Baldwin (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992), 68-98, especially 72-86 and fig. 5.1. Both categories comprise ailments affecting bodily operations and mental functions.

for the former is the imbalance of bodily systems and a general disruption of the harmony between the individual and the world at large.[24] The basis for the latter is the belief that an individual may be adversely affected in both mind and body by external influences.[25]

In the case of the ancient Mediterranean World, both archaeological and literary artifacts provide evidence for such a division. For example, a collection of second and third century AD Greek inscriptions from Lydia and Phrygia attests a popular reliance on propitiary activities to assuage divine ire or to atone for personal transgressions, both of which were believed to be responsible for causing a physical affliction.[26] The texts of these inscriptions depict a population that was not unaware of rational medicine and its healing procedures; indeed, specific mention of medical practitioners appears in the inscriptions themselves, and in some cases physicians are commended for medical treatment in the very same text that expresses gratitude to a divinity for a cure.[27] Despite this fact, however, the practical and conceptual separation of the two approaches to physical debility is quite distinct. For example, unlike evidence from the great healing centers like Epidaurus, these votive texts do not for the most part include medical terminology or references to practice, and cultic priests were often directly involved in religious healing.[28]

For the sufferers themselves other factors played a role in choosing to regard an ailment as supernatural in origin or to appeal to divine assistance for relief. Thus, even surpassing very real considerations like financial exigencies, risk, and the like, a widespread popular belief both in the ability of local divinities to have caused specific illnesses and in their perceived omnipotence in curing such illnesses was often decisive.[29] The inscriptions themselves reveal that

[24] Matthews, "Doctors and Root Doctors," 72. A complex integration of elements in the blood is the critical factor in maintaining this natural balance.

[25] Matthews, "Doctors and Root Doctors," 78: "Unnatural illnesses are those whose cause is located outside of the world of nature and natural causes. Unnatural problems can be subdivided into two groups: unnatural mind problems which result from the inability of the individual to cope with the stresses of everyday life, and unnatural body problems which result from the deliberate, evil acts of others or magic." A similar model divides unnatural illnesses into the occult and the spiritual, both of which may affect physical and spiritual well-being. See Arvilla Payne-Jackson and John Lee, *Folk Wisdom and Mother Wit* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993), 10.

[26] See Angelos Chaniotis, "Illness and Cures in the Greek Propitiary Inscriptions and Dedications of Lydia and Phrygia," in *Ancient Medicine in Its Socio-Cultural Context*, ed. Ph. J van der Eijk, H.F.J. Horstmanshoff, and P. H. Schrijvers (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 323-344.

[27] Chaniotis, "Illness," 324, 330-331.

[28] Ibid., 330-331.

[29] Ibid., 331.

particular health problems affecting individual body parts were also associated with the specific divinities deemed responsible for them.[30] The familiar practices of magic, moreover, play a major role as well, having as their primary goal the removal of the stain of transgression from the sufferer rather than a cure for an affected organ or physical relief from disease itself.[31]

In the written record this basic dichotomy in the ancient approach is lucidly demonstrated in a comparison of the account by Herodotus of the impotent Scythians with the description of the same tribes in the Hippocratic *On Airs Waters Places*.[32] On the one hand, Herodotus represents the supernatural approach, attributing the cause of the Scythians' affliction to divine revenge upon those who had committed sacrilege (*Hist.* 1.105.2, 4):

> οἱ δὲ ἐπείτε ἀναχωρέοντες ὀπίσω ἐγίνοντο τῆς Συρίης ἐν Ἀσκάλωνι πόλι, τῶν πλεόνων Σκυθέων παρεξελθόντων ἀσινέων ὀλίγοι τινὲς αὐτῶν ὑπολειφθέντες ἐσύλησαν τῆς οὐρανίης Ἀφροδίτης τὸ ἱρόν ...τοῖσι δὲ τῶν Σκυθέων συλήσασι τὸ ἱρὸν τὸ ἐν Ἀσκάλωνι καὶ τοῖσι τούτων αἰεὶ ἐκγόνοισι ἐνέσκηψε ἡ θεὸς θήλεαν νοῦσον·
>
> And when those then making their way back from Syria were in the city of Ascalon, the majority passing by without doing damage, some few having been left behind looted the shrine of celestial Aphrodite...Upon those of the Scyths who had looted the shrine in Ascalon and upon their descendants ever after the goddess cast the "womanly disease."[33]

The perceived cause of the θήλεα νοῦσος, moreover, positions it clearly within the paradigm of folk illness since it is the testimony of its victims themselves which confirms the supernatural origins of the disease (1.105.4):

> ὥστε ἅμα λέγουσί τε οἱ Σκύθαι διὰ τοῦτό σφεας νοσέειν, καὶ ὁρᾶν παρ' ἑωυτοῖσι τοὺς ἀφικνεομένους ἐς τὴν Σκυθικὴν χώρην ὡς διακέαται τοὺς καλέουσι ἐνάρεας οἱ Σκύθαι.
>
> And so the Scythians also say that they are afflicted because of this and that those arriving in the Scythian region among them see the condition of those whom the Scythians call Enareis.

Herodotus does not elaborate further upon the condition of these

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[30] See the appendices in Chaniotis, "Illness," 338-342.

[31] Ibid., 335.

[32] The author of the Hippocratic work calls them Ἀναριεῖς; Herodotus refers to them as Ἐναρεῖς.

[33] Among the ancients the most common meaning for θήλεα νοῦσος was "pederasty," although comparison with the Hippocratic passage clearly verifies it as impotence here as well. See W. W. How and J. Wells, *A Commentary on Herodotus,* 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 1.107.

victims of divine wrath; yet as befits a belief in the supernatural aspects of the folk medical model, the divine elements associated with the disease and its cause extend beyond impotence. Thus, in a later passage in which he discusses the art of divination in Scythia, not only does Herodotus reassert the lack of virility of the Ἐναρεῖς but reports their own belief that the very deity whom they had offended bestowed upon them special powers of divination.[34]

The Hippocratic analysis of the situation, on the other hand, relies on a well defined somatic explanation for the affliction among the Scythians, and the author discounts any kind of supernatural influence as the primary cause, asserting that all diseases are the same (*Aër.* 22.1-13):[35]

> Ἔτι τε πρὸς τούτοισιν εὐνουχίαι γίνονται οἱ πλεῖστοι ἐν Σκύθῃσι... καλεῦνταί τε οἱ τοιοῦτοι Ἀναριεῖς. οἱ μὲν οὖν ἐπιχώριοι τὴν αἰτίην προστιθέασι θεῷ καὶ σέβονται τούτους τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ προσκυνέουσι, δεδοικότες περὶ ἑωυτῶν ἕκαστοι. ἐμοὶ δὲ καὶ αὐτῷ δοκεῖ ταῦτα τὰ πάθεα θεῖα εἶναι καὶ τἄλλα πάντα καὶ οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἑτέρου θειότερον οὐδὲ ἀνθρωπινώτερον, ἀλλὰ πάντα καὶ πάντα θεῖα. ἕκαστον δὲ αὐτῶν ἔχει φύσιν τὴν ἑωυτοῦ καὶ οὐδὲν ἄνευ φύσιος γίνεται.
>
> And what is more, among these men in Scythia most become impotent...and such as these are called Anarieis. The people in these parts affix the cause to a divinity and they revere these men and prostrate themselves before them, each in fear for himself. And to me also it seems that the diseases are divine and all others as well and that none is of more divine character than the other nor of more human character either; but all are the same and all are divine. Each of them has an innate nature of its own and none comes about without it.

The author then carefully makes his case that there are perfectly natural reasons for the affliction which can be explained by a simple (though faulty) lesson in anatomy. He first outlines the steps taken by the Scythians themselves to remedy physical difficulties already prevalent among them (22.14-23):

> ὑπὸ τῆς ἱππασίης αὐτοὺς κέδματα λαμβάνει, ἅτε αἰεὶ κρεμαμένων ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων τοῖς ποσίν· ἔπειτα ἀποχωλοῦνται καὶ ἑλκοῦνται τὰ ἰσχία, οἳ ἂν σφόδρα νοσήσωσιν. ἰῶνται δὲ σφᾶς αὐτοὺς τρόπῳ τοιῷδε. ὁκόταν γὰρ ἄρχηται ἡ νοῦσος, ὄπισθεν τοῦ ὠτὸς ἑκατέρου φλέβα τάμνουσιν. ὁκόταν δὲ ἀπορρυῇ τὸ αἷμα, ὕπνος ὑπολαμβάνει ὑπὸ ἀσθενείης καὶ καθεύδουσιν. ἔπειτα ἀναγείρονται, οἱ μέν τινες ὑγιέες ἐόντες, οἱ δ' οὔ.

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[34] 4.67.2: οἱ δὲ Ἐνάρεες οἱ ἀνδρόγυνοι τὴν Ἀφροδίτην σφι λέγουσι μαντικὴν δοῦναι· ("The effeminized Enareis say that Aphrodite gave them prophecy").

[35] The text is that of W.H.S. Jones, ed. and trans., *Hippocrates*, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Texts (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

> Swellings caused by riding horses takes hold of them because they are always sitting on their mounts; then those who are very sick become lame and ulcerated in the hips. And they cure themselves in this way: when the disease begins they cut the vein behind each ear. And when the blood stops flowing out, sleep overtakes them because of their weakness and they fall asleep. When they awake later on, some are healthy, and some not.[36]

The author's rational explanation of the physical cause for the Scythians' impotence then follows (22.23-27):

> ἐμοὶ μὲν οὖν δοκεῖ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ἰήσει διαφθείρεσθαι ὁ γόνος. εἰσὶ γὰρ παρὰ τὰ ὦτα φλέβες, ἃς ἐάν τις ἐπιτάμῃ, ἄγονοι γίνονται ἐπιτμηθέντες. ταύτας τοίνυν μοι δοκέουσι τὰς φλέβας ἐπιτάμνειν.
>
> The seed seems to me therefore to be destroyed in this process of healing. For there are veins alongside the ears which, whenever someone cuts them, become devoid of seed once having been cut. As far as I am concerned they seem to me to be cutting these veins.

According to the account that follows (22.27-36) the Scythians who have had this treatment are afterwards unable to have intercourse but consider it a divine punishment, eventually assuming feminine ways and adjudging themselves devoid of their virility.[37] Yet the author definitively refutes these claims to divine intervention as well. By a logically sophisticated socio-cultural analysis of the situation he explains that since the disease occurs predominantly among the members of the upper class, who were more likely to ride horses and who were more likely to appease the gods, the claims for supernatural influence should be dismissed on the grounds that if anything, impotence should be universal among the Scythians or at least restricted to the poor (22.37-53). He then convincingly reiterates his opinion on the the natural origins of the affliction (22.53-62):

> ἀλλὰ γάρ, ὥσπερ καὶ πρότερον ἔλεξα, θεῖα μὲν καὶ ταῦτά ἐστιν ὁμοίως τοῖς ἄλλοις· γίνεται δὲ κατὰ φύσιν ἕκαστα. καὶ ἡ τοιαύτη νοῦσος ἀπὸ τοιαύτης προφάσιος τοῖς Σκύθῃσι γίνεται οἵην εἴρηκα. ἔχει δὲ καὶ κατὰ τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀνθρώπους ὁμοίως.
>
> But just as I said earlier, while these matters are of divine origin in similar fashion to other cases, each does come about according to nature. And such a disease occurs among the Scythians because of

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[36] The exact meaning of the word κέδματα is difficult to ascertain. According to LSJ it most likely refers to collections of fluid. See now also Andrea Bozzi, *Note di Lessicografia Ippocratica* (Rome: Edizioni dell' Ateneo, 1982), 40-41 and references, where the word is defined as "gonfiore agli arti inferiori" although according to the (corrupt) definition in Hesychius it is also a malady of the genitals as well: περὶ τὰ γεννητικὰ μόρια.

[37] 22.34: καταγνόντες ἑωυτῶν ἀνανδρείην ("laying a charge of unmanliness against themselves").

> such a reason as I have said. And it holds in a similar fashion even for the rest of mankind.

In fact, the author claims that frequent horseback riding, in addition to causing the usual swelling of the joints, sciatica, and gout, also has a deleterious effect on male sexuality.[38] Finally, in the specific case of the Scythians both environmental and cultural factors play a significant role as natural causes for the impotence (22.62-69):

> ταῦτα δὲ τοῖσι Σκύθῃσι πρόσεστι, καὶ εὐνουχοειδέστατοί εἰσιν ἀνθρώπων διὰ ταύτας τε τὰς προφάσιας καὶ ὅτι ἀναξυρίδας ἔχουσιν αἰεὶ καί εἰσιν ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων τὸ πλεῖστον τοῦ χρόνου, ὥστε μήτε χειρὶ ἅπτεσθαι τοῦ αἰδοίου, ὑπό τε τοῦ ψύχεος καὶ τοῦ κόπου ἐπιλήθεσθαι τοῦ ἱμέρου καὶ τῆς μείξιος. καὶ μηδὲν παρακινεῖν πρότερον ἢ ἀνανδρωθῆναι.
>
> These are the problems which affect the Scythians. They are the most impotent of men for these very reasons and because they are always wearing tight trousers and are on horseback most of the time, so that they do not touch their genitals with their hands. Also, because of cold and weariness they forget about desire and about sexual relations. And they do not get excited before they are made impotent.[39]

Compared with the Herodotean analysis of the same physical affliction, then, the Hippocratic approach outlines a clearly rational approach for determining the cause of impotence. Indeed, what becomes immediately apparent from examining these two opposing views is the common and inherent tension between ancient perceptions of natural and supernatural cause. In fact, such a tension is paradigmatic for the entire matter of the opposition between scientific investigation and the belief in the supernatural or magical.[40]

Like the varieties of perceived causes for impotence, ancient cures for the affliction fall readily into the same basic categories; and they represent the two branches of a larger general category often referred to as "folk medicine." [41] Accordingly, there are ancient impo-

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[38] 22.59-62: ὅκου γὰρ ἱππάζονται μάλιστα καὶ πυκνότατα, ἐκεῖ πλεῖστοι ὑπὸ κεδμάτων καὶ ἰσχιάδων καὶ ποδαγριῶν ἁλίσκονται καὶ λαγνεύειν κάκιστοί εἰσι ("For wherever people ride very much and very often, most of them are there attacked by swellings and hip problems and gout; and they are the worst when it comes to having sexual intercourse").

[39] The alternate reading ἀνδρωθῆναι ("to reach manhood") has again been proposed. See Alain Ballabriga, "Les Eunuques et Leurs Femmes," *Metis* 1.1 (1986), 137-138. Ballabriga contests Littré's adoption of ἀνανδρωθῆναι on the grounds that the sense of the passage refers more properly to prepubescent youths rather than to sexually capable males.

[40] Cf. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience*, 31.

[41] For an excellent introduction to the subject of folk medicine with useful bibliography, see Don Yoder, *Discovering American Folklife: Studies in Ethnic, Religious, and Regional Culture* (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1990), 85-133.

tence cures that exemplify so called "natural" medicine, according to the tenets of which remedies are derived predominantly from substances in the natural world. This branch of folk medicine "represents one of man's earliest reactions to his natural environment."[42] Other cures exemplify the magico-religious aspect of folk medicine in their reliance upon supernaturally charged intermediary objects in a transference of good or evil influence.[43] Belief in the efficacy of such a magico-religious approach "commonly involves a complicated, prescientific world-view...,"[44] and consequently it takes on a conceptual structure similar to that of contemporary science.

Since ancient cures for impotence consist of elements of both approaches, the natural and the supernatural, it is important to understand how and when the two branches converge or overlap.[45] For example, many impotence cures rely on the external application of natural substances in the form of salves, plasters, and ointments. In this way, then, the ancient attitude toward impotence treatment partakes of concepts that are very similar to current belief in the modern, albeit marginally scientific cures typified by stimulative lotions, potions, and pills derived from either "natural" or synthesized sources. Perhaps the most famous ancient account of such externally applied substances is reported by Theophrastus in Book 9 of the *Historia plantarum*, where much folk medicinal information collected from "rootcutters" (ῥιζοτόμοι) resides. In a passage famous as much for its omission by a prudish editor as for its information about sexually stimulative plants, Theophrastus recounts the effects of a salve derived from an unidentified plant. These were halted only by the failure of other bodily systems (*HP* 9.18.9.):

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[42] Yoder, *Discovering Folklife*, 92.

[43] A distinction should be made between the magical and the religious. Note Hufford, *Belief Word Tools*, 28: "Control is the crucial point in distinguishing MAGICAL practices from RELIGIOUS practice...The distinction is often put in terms of supplication (RELIGION) versus control (MAGIC)." In other words religion's orientation is toward supernatural persons; magic's orientation is toward supernatural forces or its treatment of spirits as though mere forces. The differences were also apparent to the ancients, on which see Hans Dieter Betz, "Magic and Mystery in the Greek Magical Papyri," in Faraone and Obbink, *Magika Hiera*, 244-247. Note as well, however, Scarborough's cautions about the dangers of separating out too precisely the scientific, the religious, and the magical elements of ancient pharmacology ("Pharmacology," 150-151).

[44] Yoder, *Discovering Folklife*, 92.

[45] Ibid., 93: "In many cases herbs and other rational cures were overlaid with magical ritual either in the preparation or in the healing technique." Note also 92: "Sometimes, too, special occupational classes, like shepherds, had herbal as well as magical cures for their animals and their colleagues." For the existence of the combination of the scientific and the irrational and its persistence in the Greek intellectual landscape, see Scarborough, "Pharmacology," 138-139.

θαυμασιωτάτη δὲ ἦν ὁ Ἰνδὸς εἶχεν· οὐ γὰρ παρενεγκαμένοις ἀλλ' ἀλειψαμένοις ἔφασαν τὸ αἰδοῖον ἐντείνεσθαι, τὴν δύναμιν δ' οὕτως ἰσχυρὰν εἶναι ὥσθ' ὁπόσαις ἂν βούλοιντο πλησιάζειν· τοὺς δὲ χρησαμένους φάναι καὶ δώδεκα· αὐτὸν γοῦν λέγειν, καὶ γὰρ ἦν ἰσχυρὸς καὶ μέγας, ὅτι ἑβδομήκοντά ποτε πλησιάσειε· τὴν δὲ πρόεσιν αὐτῷ τοῦ σπέρματος εἶναι κατὰ στράγγα, τελευτῶν δὲ εἰς αἷμα ἀγαγεῖν.[46]

Most wondrous [of these plants] was that which an Indian had. For they said that the penis becomes hard not for those who have been served the plant, but for those who have applied it as a salve; and that the power is so strong that they consort with as many women as they wish; that those who use it claim [they can have intercourse with] even twelve. [They also say] that since he was of great stature and powerful, the Indian himself said he had once slept with seventy women and that the release of his sperm came drop by drop; at length he drew blood.

Nor were males the only beneficiaries:

ἔτι δὲ σφοδροτέρως τὰς γυναῖκας ὁρμᾶν ὅταν χρήσωνται τῷ φαρμάκῳ. αὕτη μὲν οὖν εἴπερ ἀληθὴς ὑπερβάλλουσά τις δύναμις.

Yet it excites women rather violently whenever they use the drug. Indeed, if this is the truth, it is something of an extraordinary power.[47]

Since Theophrastus was quite aware of the descriptive difficulties encountered in any treatment of plant substances whose use spanned the divide between the magico-religious sphere and that of medical men and herbalists,[48] the distinction between eating (παρενεγκαμένοις) the plant and applying its substance as a salve (ἀλειψαμένοις) is an important one. Its application as an ointment can be seen as representing a reliance on a more externally generated magical approach. On the other hand, simply eating the herb would suggest that its efficacy derives primarily from a belief in dietary properties and is more representative of the natural approach where the actual physical properties of the herb would tend to predominate. In the same discussion Theophrastus further explains how such internally ingested remedies operate (9.18.10):[49]

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[46] Text of Frederich Wimmer, ed., *Theophrasti Eresii opera* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1854.); Hort's Loeb omits *HP* 9.18.3-11 because of its sexually oriented content. See Anthony Preus, "Drugs and Psychic States in *HP* 9.8-20," in *Theophrastean Studies on Natural Science, Physics and Metaphysics, Ethics, Religion, and Rhetoric*, ed. William W. Fortenbaugh and Robert W. Sharples, Studies in Classical Humanities, vol. 3. (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), 76-99, especially 88-91 and Scarborough, "Pharmacology," 163-164 n. 2 and 170 n. 124.

[47] It is not specified how the substance was used by women; presumably, it was ingested.

[48] Scarborough, "Pharmacology," 147-148.

[49] In the case of most ingredients the means of ingestion was often wine. Animal ingredients deemed stimulative to the male included (not surprisingly) the testes of

τὸ δὲ ὅλον εἶναι φύσεις τινὰς τοιαύτας αἳ ποιοῦσιν ὁρμητικωτέρους· καὶ οὐκ ἄτοπον· ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς τροφίμοις χυμοῖς ὁρῶμεν οὔσας καὶ ἐν ξηροῖς καὶ ἐν ὑγροῖς.

[And they say] that on the whole some natures [of plants] exist such as to make individuals more excited. And this is not a strange occurrence, since we observe natures being this way in nourishing juices both in dry and in moist [foods].

Nonetheless, despite the generally rational approach of Theophrastus and his rejection of the use of charms,[50] elsewhere the methods and the substances involved in the treatment of impotence are intimately combined with a pervasive belief in magical influence as both a cause and a cure for erectile failure. Magical cures for impotence, moreover, involve the wide range of objects and activities associated with attempts to circumvent natural processes or divine intervention. Amulets of varying composition are often used in this regard, and these may actually prove successful provided the user is convinced of the efficacy of such treatment.[51]

Such beliefs were widespread as is the surviving evidence for them. Thus, as the overview of the literary works in Chapter One has shown, there exists a close connection between the representation of impotence and an attendant awareness of both natural and supernatural elements; specifically magical elements, moreover, as a cause or as a cure for male sexual dysfunction appear thematically in a number of these.[52] But nowhere is the connection between the two more closely integrated into the text itself than in several works of Latin literature. The first example of this association appears in an elegy of Tibullus (1.5) in which the narrator laments the end of his affair with Delia. In a poem marked throughout by references to magical enchantment,[53] witchcraft is also charged by the narrator's

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an assortment of those animals, both wild and domestic, perceived as particularly robust (cf. n. 7). The bull, the rooster, and the ram were some of the more popular animal sources for this stimulative material; the beaver provided not only the organs but *castoreum,* the special fluid derived from them (Pliny *NH* 8.47.109). Many other animal organs and fluids were also popular, and particulars are encyclopedically gathered in Hopfner, *Sexualleben,* 276-285. Such practices are far from obsolete: men from the village of Akmaral in Kazakhstan consider the blood from freshly shorn stag antlers to be a potency-enhancing drink, and dried antlers containing the drug pantocrin are exported to China and Korea. See "Antler Blood an Aphrodisiac for Kazakhstan Men," July 9, 1996, Reuters News Service, posted on CNN Interactive (http://cnn.com/index.html; original URL: http://cnn.com/WORLD/9607/09/fringe.antlers.wir/index.html).

50 Scarborough, "Pharmacology," 149.

51 Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy,* 83; other references at n. 198. See also Chapter Four on magic stones and amulets.

52 E.g., *Od.* 10. 299-306 and Hipponax 78Dg, 13-17.

53 E.g., 9-14, 47-60.

current unsatisfied partner despite the actual cause for his sexual failure (39-42):

sed iam cum gaudia adirem,
admonuit dominae deseruitque Venus.
tunc me discedens devotum femina dixit,
et pudet et narrat scire nefanda meam.

But just as I was arriving at that elevated state,
Venus reminded me of my mistress and left me.
Then leaving, my lady friend said I was bewitched,
And she, ashamed, tells me my mistress knows the unspeakable.

The bewitchment that has occurred, however, is not brought about by the ordinary means of sung charms or deadly herbs mentioned in this poem and elsewhere in Tibullus;[54] it is, rather, the very memory of the beauty of Delia which deadens the narrator's sexual powers (43-45):

Non facit hoc verbis, facie tenerisque lacertis
devovet et flavis nostra puella comis.

She doesn't do this with words; my girl weaves a spell
With her face, shapely arms, and ashen locks.

This brief passage is significant in a number of ways. On a dramatic level the lines stand in direct opposition to those Horatian texts discussed earlier (*Epodes* 8 and 12) in which failure to perform sexually is blamed by a male narrator on the physical repulsiveness of a potential female partner who is depicted as actually present and with whom a verbal exchange takes place. In the Tibullan elegy it is the overpowering beauty of a former (and absent) lover which deprives the male of sexual success. Such beauty, resident solely in the memory and consequently truly incorporeal, is, moreover, equated with magical influence and in effect possesses essentially the very same power. And like magical influence, the essence of Delia's physical beauty is depicted as wielding its power even when separated from

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[54] 11: *carmine cum magico praecinuisset anus* ("when the old woman had sung out with a magic chant") and 59-60 where Delia herself is asked to put aside witchcraft:

at tu quam primum sagae praecepta rapacis
desere, nam donis vincitur omnis amor.

But abandon as soon as possible the teachings of the insatiable witch,
For every love affair is overcome by gifts.

Cf. 1.8.17-18:

num te carminibus, num te pallentibus herbis
devovit tacito tempore noctis anus?

The old woman hasn't enchanted you with charms,
With pale herbs in the quiet of the night, has she?

its corporeal source. Finally, the emphasis on the physical attractiveness of the object of male desire also plays an important role not only in simply eliciting male response to sexual failure but also in the personal attitudes of both partners, an issue that appears in other texts as well.

Magical elements as the basis for impotence are more intricately woven into the fabric of two other texts, Ovid *Amores* 3.7 and the *Satyrica* of Petronius, and these artifacts are even more significant in what they reveal about both the natural and the supernatural approaches to the affliction.[55] While these generically dissimilar texts share a number of attitudes to the problem of male sexual failure and while they clearly typify the similarities between ancient and modern cultural sensibilities in their approach to impotence, their most important feature is a conscious and deliberately described association of impotence with the two approaches to its cause and to its cure. Accordingly, each work assumes on the one hand a somatic paradigm for impotence and on the other, a psychological model, which in the ancient view is conceptually approximated by magical elements. A close examination of these two literary representations reveals how closely common magical elements are linked to male sexual failure.

Ovid's poetic account of his unsuccessful tryst with an eager partner is exemplary for the issues in question.[56] The laments of the narrator about his condition include a full range of considerations based on the somatic paradigm and establish certain physical factors as thematically significant. In an introductory couplet reminiscent of both the Horatian works and the Tibullan elegy discussed above, the narrator first recounts the beauty and allure of his partner (1-2):

> At non formosa est, at non bene culta puella,
> at, puto, non votis saepe petita meis?
>
> But isn't she fine looking, a well-kept young lady?
> But, I believe, isn't she the one I often prayed for?

He next passes on to the impending loss of youthful virility and the deadening effects of aging (17-19):

[55] For the Ovidian models of the Petronian passage, see P. G. Walsh, *The Roman Novel* (Cambridge: University Press, 1970), 42 and Sullivan, *Satyricon*, 236 n. 1. See now also J. Adamietz, "Circe in den *Satyrica* Petrons und das Wesen dieses Werkes," *Hermes* 123 (1995), 321-324.

[56] A number of thematic and parodic correspondences exist between this poem and several others (*CP* 80, Horace *Epode* 12 and *Serm.* 1.2, Martial *Ep.* 11, and *AP* 11.30), on which see Richlin, *Garden*, 117-119.

quae mihi ventura est, siquidem ventura, senectus,
   cum desit numeris ipsa iuventa suis?
a, pudet annorum: quo me iuvenemque virumque?

What old age is to come for me, if indeed it comes,
   When youth itself falls short?
Ah, shame to my years. What's it to me to be both youth and man?

Finally he boasts longingly of his extravagant sexual prowess with previous lovers, a verification of the emphasis upon the physical component of male sexual performance (23-26):

at nuper bis flava Chlide, ter candida Pitho,
   ter Libas officio continuata meo est;
exigere a nobis angusta nocte Corinnam,
   me memini numeros sustinisse novem.

But recently ashen Chlide two, milky Pitho three,
   And Libas three times got my services.
And I recall Corinna demanding it from me one short night
   And that I maintained the number up to nine.[57]

Yet physical considerations tell only part of the story. In fact, an important psychological element does appear in the poem as well, that of shame (37-38):[58]

huc pudor accessit facti: pudor ipse nocebat;
   ille fuit vitii causa secunda mei.

To the previous came shame for the deed; shame itself was harmful;
   That was the second reason for my failing.

Here the narrator, recognizing the interpersonal nature of the problem, acknowledges the power of personal disapproval generated by sexual disappointment to exacerbate his inability to become aroused. The externality of cause represented by shame (*pudor*) is especially important in this context. In applying the paradigm of folk illness to Ovid's first-person narrative, I see the role of shame in this account functioning as an intermediate element between the purely physical causes for impotence and those external magical causes that the narrator also recounts and that stand as the ancient equivalent to the psychogenic elements in the modern model of male sexual debility.

More important, however, is that in Ovid's description another perceived cause of impotence and of the resultant anxiety about a

[57] Cf. Catullus *c.* 32.8: *novem continuas fututiones* ("nine endless bouts of screwing").
[58] It should be noted, however, that to a certain degree the narrator's reference to shame may be more properly classed as a psychogenic response to impotence and its consequences rather than an actual cause.

remedy derives from a magical contamination brought about by maleficent sorcery and by the use of effective substances from the natural world. As he openly indulges in self-examination, the narrator ascribes the devastating failure to perform to the influence of exotic and harmful herbal preparations, traditionally efficacious charms and incantations, and outright malevolence by the purveyors of witchcraft (27-30):

> Num mea Thessalico languent devota veneno
> corpora? num misero carmen et herba nocent,
> sagave poenicea defixit nomina cera
> et medium tenuis in iecur egit acus?

> Can my equipment be adroop, bewitched by some Thessalian potion?
> Charm and herbs aren't laming my pathetic tool, are they?
> Or did some sorceress stick my name onto a reddish wax image
> And force slim pins through the midst of its liver?

While these standard reflections on the general theme of magical influence and amorous involvement are found elsewhere in other contexts,[59] in this particular case the narrator is quite convinced of the likelihood that this witchcraft is the actual cause of sexual failure (35-36):

> quid vetat et nervos magicas torpere per artes?
> forsitan inpatiens fit latus inde meum.

> What's to say that my bow's unstrung because of some hocus pocus?
> Could be my thing can't stand up because of that.

Nor is this idle speculation by a frustrated lover. In lines reminiscent of the Tibullan passage discussed earlier, the narrator's unsatisfied partner likewise accuses him of being bewitched by sorcery; but she also suggests suspiciously that he had spent his energies in prior lovemaking (79-80):

> aut te traiectis Aeaea venefica lanis
> devovet, aut alio lassus amore venis.[60]

> Either a Circean spellweaver is bewitching you with a pierced woolen doll,
> Or you're hanging limp from some other recent tumble.

These lines serve an important function in our understanding of how the folk medical traditions linked to impotence interact with one another in literary contexts. On one hand, the bewitchment of the

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[59] Most notably in Theocritus *Idyll* 2. For similar elements in Horace *Epode* 3 and their significance to the present investigation, see Chapter Five.

[60] For a general overview and a treatment of the serious manuscript difficulties in these lines see Anne-Marie Tupet, *La Magie dans la Poésie Latine* (Paris: Société d' Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1976), 384-385.

failed lover is understood as more than just the simple metaphorical distraction of a previous lover as in the Tibullan elegy; rather it is a recognizable and powerful force befitting the enchantress Circe herself, definitively establishing the perceived role of malevolent magic upon the natural operations of the body. The direct reference to Circe (*Aeaea venefica*), moreover, evokes the imagery of an Odysseus divinely aided and protected by a powerful herb (φάρμακον) from losing his virility at the hands of the Homeric witch; it also echoes other passages from the *Amores*.[61] On the other hand, in a manner reminiscent of the intersection of the natural world with supernatural elements evidenced in the Homeric passage, sexual exhaustion, a somatic cause speculatively attributed to previous lovemaking, is prominently situated alongside the pre- and parascientific rationale of magic. This literary collocation, then, represents a popular conceptual association basic to the folk medical model.

Petronian fiction not only echoes these concepts but also further refines the literary representation of the folk medical paradigm as it applies to male sexual dysfunction. For instance, throughout the *Satyrica* the narrative account of the impotent Encolpius's unsuccessful attempts to regain his sexual abilities depicts concerns similar to those in the Ovidian poem. For example, Encolpius dreamily reflects upon the enticement and allure of his would-be lover, Circe (126.14):

> nulla vox est quae formam eius possit comprehendere, nam quicquid dixero, minus erit.
>
> There's no speech which can encompass her beauty, for whatever I will say will be too little.[62]

Encolpius also questions his own masculinity in explaining to his partner his sexual failure (130.4):

> illud unum memento, non me sed instrumenta peccasse. paratus miles arma non habui.

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[61] Cf. 1.8.5 (of Dipsas): *illa magas artes Aeaeaque carmina novit* ("She knows magic skills and Circean incantations"). Note as well 2.15.9-10 (where the narrator longs to be closer to his beloved):

> o utinam fieri subito mea munera possem
> artibus Aeaeae Carpathiive senis.
>
> O how I wish I could right now become my gifts
> By the arts of Circe or of the old Proteus.

[62] The remainder of Encolpius's reflection (126.15-18) buoyantly describes Circe's individual features, finally likening her to the statue of Diana by Praxiteles. Cf. also 131.9.

Remember that one fact: that it wasn't me who blundered; it was my tool. I was a ready soldier, but I had no weapons.

Understandably, he also engages in bouts of self-recrimination by addressing his own offending penis, a topos common in such contexts (132.9-10):[63]

'quid dicis' inquam 'omnium hominum deorumque pudor? nam te nominare quidem te inter res serias fas est. hoc de te merui, ut me in caelo positum ad inferos traheres?'

I said, "What do you say for yourself, you shame of both gods and men? For it is right for me to call you that in such serious circumstances. Did I merit this from you: that you dragged me to hell when once I had a place in heaven?"

Yet despite the narrator's interpersonal explanations, the intersection of a maleficent sorcery with male sexual dysfunction is the most prominent thematic element.[64] In fact, Encolpius himself twice proposes this as the reason for his failure to perform sexually with his bedmate Circe.

Encolpius's initial claim that sorcery has caused his debilitated condition occurs after an embarrassing failure of his virility. This results in an assault of questions by Circe in which are emphasized both physical factors and the influence of a third party as the real causes for Encolpius's incomplete performance (128.1):

'quid est?' inquit 'numquid te osculum meum offendit? numquid spiritus ieiunio marcens? numquid alarum neglegens sudor? aut si haec non sunt, numquid Gitona times?'

"What's going on?" she said. "Does my kiss offend you? My breath weak from fasting? Perspiration from unattended armpits? Or if these aren't the reasons, are you afraid of Giton?"

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[63] Richlin, *Garden,* 116.

[64] The alleged or actual causes of this impotence are not made absolutely apparent in the fragmentary text of the *Satyrica* as we have it; in general they have been associated in some degree or another with the so-called *ira Priapi* theme. See Sullivan, *Satyrica,* 92-93; also H. D. Rankin, "Petronius, Priapus and Priapeum LXVIII," in *Petronius the Artist* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), 52-67 and especially nn. 1-5 for earlier pertinent literature and 54-59 for the Priapus theme. There is a concise account of similarities to the *Odyssey* in Richlin, *Garden,* 192; for the literary aspects of the Priapic poems and the god's portrayal in them, see also 116-127. A closer examination of Priapean material in Petronius and his relationship to earlier parodic material can be found in Carles Miralles and Jaume Pòrtulas, "Hipponax and Petronius," in *The Poetry of Hipponax* (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1988), 71-119, especially 73-77. This is not to say that there is total agreement on that thematic strand. Cf. Niall Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1990), 140, who urges care in identifying the wrath theme conditioned by events recounted toward the end of what we have of the original text. For the literary application of the theme in the midst of generic oscillation, see 179-182.

Forced to acknowledge Circe's concerns for the physical aspects of the problem, Encolpius himself reacts with physical symptoms of embarrassment and begs his partner's indulgence by explaining that while his anxiety does derive from an external source, the situation is more serious than simple fear of another lover (128.2):

> perfusus ego rubore manifesto etiam si quid habueram virium perdidi, totque corpore velut laxato 'quaeso' inquam 'regina, noli suggillare miserias. veneficio contactus sum.'
>
> Prominently flushed with red I even lost whatever manliness I had had, and with the whole range of my bodily functions as though limp, I said, "I ask you, my queen, don't mock my pitiable state. I'm infected with a magic spell."

A similar incident is recounted later in the text after Encolpius undergoes a series of activities related to magic and sorcery and intended to cure his affliction.[65] Despite these efforts, however, his condition remains unimproved, and at the beginning of an ensuing episode seriously fragmented by lacunae and of uncertain sequence as well (138.5-139.5), Encolpius, in a familiar topos, praises the beauty of his partner and laments his separation from the unsatisfied Circe (138.6):

> Quid huic formae aut Ariadne habuit aut Leda simile? Quid contra hanc Helene, quid Venus posset? ipse Paris, dearum litigantium iudex, si hanc in comparatione vidisset tam petulantibus oculis, et Helenam huic donasset et deas.
>
> What beauty like this woman did either Ariadne or Leda have? Against this woman what could Helen, what could Venus do? Why Paris himself, the judge of those pleading goddesses, if he had seen her with his lusty eyes in that lineup, would have given up both Helen and the divinities for her.[66]

That such frustrated praise for feminine physical allure is linked to the supernatural aspects of Encolpius's condition can be seen as a further indication of how closely associated in the popular imagination were these two elements. In fact, Encolpius immediately pines for yet another opportunity to perform sexually with Circe in the hope that the supernatural quality of her beauty will actually overcome the malign influences causing his impotence (138.7):

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[65] *Sat.* 131.1-7. Cf. also the warning from Circe's maid (129.10): '*solent' inquit 'haec fieri, et praecipue in hac civitate in qua mulieres etiam lunam deducunt'* ("'These things usually happen,' she said, 'and especially in this city where women even draw down the moon'").

[66] While the addressee of this wistful soliloquy is not specified, there can be little doubt that Circe is here meant.

saltem si permitteretur osculum capere, si illud caeleste ac divinum pectus amplecti, forsitan rediret hoc corpus ad vires et resipiscerent partes veneficio, credo, sopitae.

If a kiss at least were permitted, if that heavenly and divine breast could be embraced, perhaps this body would return to its manly powers; and, I am positive, the parts lulled by magical infection would recover their feeling.

The operative word in both of these passages is, of course, *veneficio,* and the dual nature of the concept of poisoning and witchcraft plays an essential part in the impotence theme of the *Satyrica.* The substantive *veneficium,* moreover, has two primary meanings: the activity that results in poisoning and, in a wider application, a paradigm of activities and a belief system whose foundation rests on the circumvention of natural and supernatural law through an intermediary.[67] In addition, both *veneficium* and the word that designates the poisonous substance or drug itself, *venenum,* have accepted associations with physical attraction and sexuality; indeed, the latter substantive actually signifies a love potion as its primary meaning.[68]

Yet while in his plaintive exchange with Circe Encolpius blames magic for the cause of his affliction, associations between impotence and magical activities as its remedy have already appeared in an earlier episode. In this case the operations recounted exhibit the basic (and familiar) elements of folk medicine in their combination of both sympathetic magic and physical treatments during the curative process. After Encolpius has prayerfully entreated the god Priapus for a cure,[69] Proselenos, an old woman knowledgeable in the ways of sorcery, inquires into his activities to see if he may have inadvertently incurred the wrath of malevolent powers (134.1-2):

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[67] LS s.v. *veneficium:* I. a poisoning; II. the preparation of magic potions, magic, sorcery. These meanings should actually be qualified in that the former technically refers to any sudden and unexplained death not necessarily brought about by poisoning but by any clandestine means. The latter meaning ultimately derives from wider associations with sorcery in general and corresponds most closely to the Greek γοητεία, sorcery of an intermediary type. See Fritz Graf, *La magie dans l'Antiquité Gréco-Romaine: Ideologie et Pratique.* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994), 58-59 and Graf, "Excluding the Charming," 32-33. Perhaps this is why Rankin (*Petronius the Artist,* 55-56 nn. 11-13) seems to translate *veneficio* in two different ways.

[68] As in Propertius 2.12.19 and Horace *Epode* 5.62. *Venenum* derives from **venesnum,* a root originally designating desire (like the Lat. *Venus*). Cf. *OLD* s.v. *veneror:* "**venus* from IE root *wen-* 'desire' as in Gothic *wēns* 'hope', OHG *wunsken,* Eng. wish." The word can also function as the equivalent of the Greek φάρμακον (Graf, *La Magie,* 58), and there existed in both terms an inherent semantic ambiguity about their use in poisoning or magic, on which see Clyde Pharr, "The Interdiction of Magic in Roman Law," *TAPA* 63 (1932), 272-274.

[69] *Sat.* 133.

> 'quae striges comederunt nervos tuos, aut quod purgamentum nocte calcasti in trivio aut cadaver? ne a puero quidem te vindicasti, sed mollis, debilis, lassus tamquam caballus in clivo, et operam et sudorem perdidisti. nec contentus ipse peccare, mihi deos iratos excitasti.'

> "Which owls have feasted upon your manly powers? Or what waste did you step in at night at the crossroads? Or was it a cadaver? You've not even freed yourself from that boy. But weak and soft and limp like a horse on a hill you've wasted your energy and your sweat. Not content yourself to sin, you've prompted the gods to be angry at me too."

In the following lines (134.3-6) the narrator graphically recounts the degrading physical abuse he suffers at the hands of Proselenos,[70] who then remands him to Oenethea, the priestess of Priapus, after ascribing his condition to unfavorable astrological alignments at his birth and mocking as well his inability to perform.[71] Oenothera herself then promises to revivify Encolpius's sexuality by the simple physical act of spending the night with him (134.10-11):

> his auditis Oenothea inter utrumque consedit motoque diutius capite 'istum' inquit 'morbum sola sum quae emendare scio. et ne putetis perplexe agere, rogo ut adulescentulus mecum nocte dormiat...nisi illud tam rigidum reddidero quam cornu.'

> When she heard these things, Oenothea sat between each of us and having shaken her head for some time she said, "I am the only one who knows how to fix the affliction. And so you don't think I'm acting in a confusing way, I only ask that the young fellow sleep with me for the night...[Curse me] unless I render it as stiff as I horn."

Yet even here the close association of the natural and the supernatural again becomes evident. Oenothea prominently underscores her reliance on intermediary magical solutions with her claims of magical superiority over the physical world and even over celestial objects

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[70] The magical procedures require both passive and active participation by the afflicted party and include a variety of activities involving binding and abuse and relying on the magical properties of spittle, dust, pebbles, and enchantment. For further discussion see Chapter Five.

[71] *Sat.* 134.8-9:

> 'o' inquit 'Oenothera, hunc adulescentem quem vides, malo astro natus est... numquam tu hominem tam infelicem vidisti: lorum in aqua, non inguina habet. ad summam, qualem putas esse qui de Circes toro sine voluptate surrexit?'

> "Oenothera," she said, "this young man whom you see here, why he's been born under a bad sign...You have never seen a person so hapless: he has a rope floating in water, not sexual equipment. To top it off, what kind of fellow do you think he is who got up from Circe's bed without getting his rocks off?"

as she enumerates her powers in a hexameter poem marked by a traditional literary description of the classical witch (134.12):[72]

> quidquid in orbe vides, paret mihi. florida tellus,
> cum volo, siccatis arescit languida sucis,
> cum volo, fundit opes, scopulique atque horrida saxa
> Niliacas iaculantur aquas. mihi pontus inertes
> submittit fluctus, zephyrique tacentia ponunt
> ante meos sua flabra pedes. mihi flumina parent
> Hyrcanaeque tigres et iussi stare dracones.
> quid leviora loquor? lunae descendit imago
> carminibus deducta meis, trepidusque furentes
> flectere Phoebus equos revoluto orbe.

> Whatever you see in the world obeys me. When I wish,
> The flowery earth grows dry with its juices parched.
> When I wish, it pours forth its wealth,
> And the cliffs and bristling rocks spout up Nile waters.
> The sea puts its inactive waves in submission to me,
> And the breezes lay their blasts falling quiet at my feet.
> Rivers obey me and I command Hyrcanian tigers
> And serpents to stand dead still.
> But why do I speak only these trivial things?
> The likeness of the moon descends,
> Brought down by by my chants; and fearful Phoebus,
> With the world turned topsy turvy,
> Is forced to bend his raging steeds.

Thus, in these and additional passages to be discussed later and in ways similar to corresponding situations in their Ovidian predecessor, the perceived association of impotence with the effects of magic contamination plays an important thematic role. Nevertheless, despite the prominent place the intersection of male dysfunction and magic holds in these two texts, solely as a literary theme impotence plays a secondary role for present purposes; for once the magical association is made, other considerations prompt a wider examination of the relationship between male sexual dysfunction and its perceived cures among the ancients. In specific terms, it soon becomes evident that the popular perception of impotence as an affliction with its origins in magical elements is more widespread than has been previously realized once the multitude of remedies deemed effective for it by the ancients comes under scrutiny. Furthermore, among certain of these cures there exist perceived relationships based on visual similarities to the affected organ and on the medical and magical properties thought to revive sexual powers. There is,

[72] An additional six lines in the manuscript describing famous mythological practitioners of magic are considered interpolations.

therefore, an identifiable element of magical contagion which functions as the perceived underlying cause for the physical condition of sexual dysfunction and which ultimately affects any attempts at a remedy. Some impotence cures, though, do not interact directly with contagion, nor do they themselves take part in the transference of magical influence. In such cases they may operate rather because of their magically charged association with objects or images of acknowledged medicinal or dietary value which are also perceived as sources or conduits of sympathetic contagion. Nonetheless, it is magical activity per se that is most often the means by which the symptoms of that contagion are treated.

In a very real way to the ancient mind the belief in a magical contagion, συμπάθεια, is the basis upon which the world operates, and it would not be incorrect to suggest that this belief corresponds quite closely to modern ideas of scientific causation. Along with the concept of contagion come other associations ranging over the sensible world of nature and the invisible world of magic. A systematized interconnectedness of these two spheres becomes the framework upon which rest the perception of a contagion like impotence, its supposed causes, its physical and emotional impact, and the numerous cures undertaken to remedy its effects. Each of these individual elements derive, like the tangible and intangible worlds themselves, both from the natural world and from the world of sympathetic magic. As a result, magic may constitute an element of any remedy as a result of analogy, in which lies the origin of the ancient concept of signatures, and of συμπάθεια, the hidden link between the natural world and the miraculous.[73]

At work in this conceptual system as well are the principles of alchemy, the search for the essential force (οὐσία, δύναμις) of things both animate and inanimate. This essential force may be properly regarded as a vaguely spiritual concept but yet still based in tangible form.[74] The term δύναμις in particular often appears in both magic and medicine, and in a pharmacological sense its designation as "property" has been applied to a particular active principle of a drug.[75] In addition to these ideas of what makes up the very essence

[73] See Allbutt, *Greek Medicine,* 52-53 and Eugene Tavenner, *Studies in Magic from Latin Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1966), 7.

[74] In addition to magical aspects, a primitive concept of chemistry is often what is meant by the term δύναμις. See J. Röhr, *Der okkulte Kraftbegriff,* Philologus Supplementband 17 (Leipzig, 1924), 8 with citations there; also Marcel Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic,* trans. Robert Brain (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), 102.

[75] Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy,* 228 n. 122.

of a particular thing, the very notion of its nature (φύσις) plays a role in linking objects and images. With the elements understood in this way, questions about the combination of both the supernatural and the natural causes of certain phenomena can be accommodated. Furthermore, careful inquiry about the character of particular phenomena leads to the formulation of a general rule that "every physical object has a nature, that is, it manifests, or conforms to, certain regularities and has a determinate physical cause or causes."[76] Once this concept is realized, it becomes an easy progression to visualize a framework of operative magic based on the essential character of objects or substances deemed to be related.

Seen in these terms, magical influences are transmitted along a chain of sympathetic associations which links images, material objects, and beings alike. These images, objects, and beings may be related in a variety of ways, very often by appearance or even by similarity of name, as in the use of λίθοι ("pebbles") as a cure for λίθοι ("bladder stones").[77] Indeed, in medical contexts the verbal aspect of this association is often based initially on the words for objects familiar from everyday life as metaphors to describe bodily ailments; such an association then passes into the realm of homeopathic healing as the very words for these objects themselves are then seen to be charged with curative power.[78] In fact, to the receptive mind magical contagion even *becomes* the equivalent of physical contagion, and transference of influence may be effected by a physical transference. In such a case the magical contagion is actually seen as literally transferred, as in Marcellus' story of the milk and the puppy.[79] Thus the idea of a very powerful bond in nature enables such transferences to operate widely among objects or images perceived to be somehow related.[80]

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[76] See Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience*, 31 and Lain Entralgo, *Therapy of the Word*, 145-147. Theophrastus struggled with the issue of the nature (φύσις) of plants when opposite effects are produced from the same source. See Preus, *Theophrastean Studies*, 90-91.

[77] Maurice Bouisson, *Magic: Its History and Principal Rites*, trans. G. Almayrac (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1961), 35 and Mauss, *General Theory*, 77. This idea is increasingly recognizable in the discussion of minerals and stones appearing below. Examples are numerous. See also Eugene McCartney, "Verbal Homeopathy and the Etymological Story," *AJP* 48 (1927), 326-343.

[78] Maryse Waegeman, "Metaphor and Verbal Homoeopathy," *Scholia* 4 (1995), 26.

[79] Mauss, *General Theory*, 66. Cf. Marcellus *De medicamentis* 21.1. The scapegoat is the best-known example. See Bouisson, *Magic: Its History*, 41-43. Numerous examples of disease transference recorded by Pliny are discussed in French, *Ancient Natural History*, 244-246. The concept is still very much alive today: Wayland D. Hand, "The Magical Transference of Disease," in *Folklore Studies in Honor of Arthur Palmer Hudson, North Carolina Folklore* 13 (1965), 83-109.

[80] Tavenner, *Studies in Magic*, 8-10, with examples and nn. 38-41. Other examples in Bouisson, *Magic: Its History*, 35-36.

From this perceived relationship two concepts emerge. The first is that things can be assimilated to one another in image or object, or in Mauss's terms, "similarity equals contiguity."[81] The second concept is that things are also related in terms of their opposites. Both concepts are more simply stated: "Like produces like; like acts upon like; opposite acts on opposite."[82] An ancient example of the former concept is a plant, the so-called man orchis, which, because of its visual similarity to the testicles (the Greek word for which was ὄρχεις) was considered aphrodisiac according to Theophrastus (*HP* 9.18.3) and Dioscorides (*De mat. med.* 3.126).[83] The root of an orchid known as *satyrion* is also mentioned by Pliny as a male sexual stimulant.[84] In each case the perceived effect upon human sexuality is dependent upon the appearance of the root and its visual similarity to the male genitalia. This association based on likeness, moreover, reveals the essentially anthropocentric nature of the entire concept of sympathetic influence. According to this model, the natural world is considered only in its relationship to the human sphere. In the case of the *orchis,* the very name of plant was derived from the human organ, and the floral structure of the *satyrion* and related plants has, in fact, been likened to the beards of satyrs, the premier examples of male sexuality.[85]

Opposing qualities act in the same way, as Riddle explains: "Just as one takes something wet when thirsty, so substances that have a strong characteristic, such as a burning taste like hot pepper, would be thought to warm a chilled body."[86] This concept, moreover, may be extended to include the opposing effects of one and the same substance. For example, the essential power inherent in some plants may be beneficial in one way yet harmful in another. In just such a manner one of the *plantae magicae* discussed by Pliny (*NH* 24.157-

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[81] Mauss, *General Theory,* 68.

[82] Ibid., 72.

[83] Illustration in Helmut Baumann, *Die Griechische Pflanzenwelt in Mythos, Kunst und Literatur,* 2nd ed. (Munich: Hirmer, 1986), 211.

[84] *NH* 26.62.96: *concitatricem vim habet satyrion* ("*Satyrion* has the power of stimulation"); elsewhere (*NH* 25.54.98) he reports it as a kind of birthwort (*Aristolochia* spp.). Cf. Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 3.128. Pliny identifies two varieties of the orchid: one resembling human testicles which swells and shrinks every other year; the other, called "feminine," resembles the phallus. Aristotle (*De plantis* 1.2.816b-817b) made the case for a separation of sexes among individual kinds of plants (against the teachings of Empedocles who theorized that male and female were found together in one specimen); the most recent Greek text (with scholia) is in H. J. Drossaart Lulofs and E.L.J. Poortman, eds., *Nicolaus Damascenus De Plantis* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1989).

[85] Waegeman, "Metaphor and Verbal Homoepathy," 25; Baumann, *Griechische Pflanzenwelt,* 210-211 with figs. 441-443 (on *Orchis italica*).

[86] Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy,* 20.

167), the *minyas* or *corinthias*, was considered a cure for serpent bite as fomented juice; yet this same juice was also deemed fatal if stepped upon or otherwise applied to the body.[87]

Relatedly, individual parts of plants have localized power. Theophrastus describes the root of the λιβανωτίς (*Lactuca graeca*) as having curative properties, but also indicates that particular parts of the plant have effects upon corresponding parts of the human body.[88] As a further development of this concept, a substance itself can be seen to have a neutral and undirected power, evidence of the balance of opposing elements, that can be manipulated by magical practices either in preparation or in actual use.[89] For example, Pliny (*NH* 30.49.143) reports that ashes of a certain variety of lizard (*stelio*) have the power of sexual stimulation as well as anaphrodisiac qualities and that the efficacy of the ashes actually depends on the hand in which they are held.[90] Such beliefs in the ability to direct supernatural forces are common throughout the world of sympathetic magic: according to local belief, the "snake nut" (*Ophiocaryon paradoxum*) of British Guiana either repels or attracts snakes accordingly as needed.[91]

But sympathetic influence is not universally, totally, or consistently transmitted along the sympathetic chain. On the contrary, such magic can be quite circumscribed: only certain properties from a conceivably immense range of possibilities are called upon to produce the necessary and desired magical result; in fact, it may best be seen as producing only whatever results are desired, and in this sense the power of sympathetic influence is quite limited.[92] Furthermore,

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[87] Unfortunately, many of these *plantae magicae* are unidentifiable according to modern Linnaean taxonomy. See the discussion of this and the following in Jerry Stannard, "Medical Plants and Folk Remedies in Pliny *Historia Naturalis*," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*, Vol. 4.1 (1982), 18-19. The plant in question is there identified with a type of parsley (*Smyrnium holusatrum*), but this is uncertain. See also J. André, *Notes de Lexicographie Botanique Grecque* (Paris: Champion, 1958), 36.

[88] *HP* 9.11.11: δύναται δὲ ἡ ῥίζα καθαίρειν καὶ ἄνω καὶ κάτω· τὸ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τὴν βλάστην ἄνω, τὸ δὲ πρὸς τὴν γὴν κάτω ("The root is capable of purification both upward and downward: for the part toward the flower operates on the upper parts while that from near the ground on the lower").

[89] Winkler, *Constraints of Desire*, 81.

[90] On the usefulness of lizards in general, see Arthur D. Nock, "The Lizard in Magic and Religion," in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 271-276. The method of preparation affects the properties of magically harvested materials. For example, the direction that leaves are pulled when stripped or the direction that bark is harvested is believed to determine the efficacy of the material. See Yoder, *Discovering Folklife*, 93.

[91] Barbara Freire-Marreco, "Charms and Amulets (Introductory and Primitive)," in *ERE* 3.395.

[92] Mauss, *General Theory*, 67.

when magic associated with an object or image is put to use, it is only one individual quality or one desired property that is called upon to bring about one particular result.[93] For the most part, then, in the realm of sympathetic magic there are specific substances, objects, and images that render specific effects.[94]

All the elements of this conceptual paradigm, moreover, are enmeshed in and directed by the kind of transferable influence that straddles both the actual and the sympathetic world. The importance of this influence is immense, for as one scholar has described it, "the world of the ancients was full of magical powers, acting in all directions, and many people must have felt constantly threatened."[95] This sympathetic web, furthermore, extends to and projects from the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. Consequently, its influence affects the sources of contagion as well as the material and the objects used to prevent that contagion or to effect a cure for it. Such an influence is also felt to exist beyond the confines of the realm of magic and magical rite; it resonates even in associations and activities that cannot actually be classed as magic at all. This is especially noticeable in some dietary regimens and in medical treatments.[96] Sympathetic influences in the ingredients suggested for dietary regimen, for example, could give added efficacy to substances already included for their medical or nutritional value, although the degree to which this is thought to occur is difficult to establish.[97]

Other considerations play an important role in the sympathetic relationship between the natural and supernatural worlds. In addition to the perceived efficacy of a substance as it is actually to be

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[93] Ibid., 69. The term is "exclusive attention and abstraction." Mauss gives as examples the various properties of clay: weight, color, coolness, and the like.

[94] Photography poses problems for those receptive to the idea of sympathetic magic. See Bouisson, *Magic: Its History*, 31.

[95] George Luck, *Arcana Mundi: Magic and Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 19.

[96] Pliny (*NH* 30.1.1-2): [*magicam*] *natam primum e medicina nemo dubitabit ac specie salutari inrepisse velut altiorem sanctioremque medicinam* ("No one doubts that magic first arose from medicine and that it has crept in with the appearance of healing just like loftier and more venerable medicine"). It should be noted that Pliny's distaste for and distrust of magical practices also extended to Greek medicine and that for him the elaborate rationale and systemization of each stood in stark contrast to the simple and traditional practices of the early Romans. See French, *Ancient Natural History*, 223-228.

[97] Cf. Thomas S. Githens, *Drug Plants of Africa*, African Handbooks no. 8 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1948), 2: "It is often impossible to determine whether a drug or a constituent of a mixture employed to combat a given symptom is used because of previous observation of beneficial action or because of its supposed magical powers."

used, the original source of a substance used in curative magic is often of major importance for its success as a remedy. A good example of this concept is the stone known as λυγγούριον, often used in treatment of the eyes. According to ancient accounts it is formed from the petrified urine of the lynx, a creature traditionally associated with sharp vision.[98] In reality, however, the stone itself is in all likelihood amber,[99] and the distinctions between the fossilized, hardened stone and a soft variety in the form of sap, also known as ἀγείρου δάκρυ ("poplar's tear"), were known to and appreciated by the ancients.[100] In composition the stone was said to be cold (ψυχρά) and very clear in appearance; and it was also said to have the ability to attract objects: straw and leaves as well as iron or copper are drawn to it, evidence of an electrostatic quality perhaps enhanced by its ultimate organic source.[101] Discovered and dug only by experts, the stones produced by wild lynxes were considered better (βελτίω) than those of domesticated animals; similarly, male stones were thought more effective than female stones.[102] In reality, then, λυγγούριον was thought to have a male and female variety.[103]

In Theophrastus's main account of λυγγούριον (*De lapidibus,* 28), he explains that the reason for this range of effectiveness, aside from the differences of diet and exercise between wild and domesticated beasts, is that since the constitutions of individual animals differ in dryness or moistness, the drier the animal is the more effective the

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[98] This explanation appears in several authors. See Waegemann, *Amulet and Alphabet,* 90-91 for references. Aristotle states (*De mir. ausc.* 76) that the lynx actively hides its urine because of its usefulness to humans. Theophrastus (*De lapidibus* 28) does not name the specific animal; the story is disputed by Dioscorides (*De mat. med.* 2.81.3), on which see Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy,* 141; cf. Strabo, 4.6.2. See also Solinus *Collectanea rerum memorabilium* 2.38 (Mommsen), 40-41. Pliny's account (*NH* 37.13.52-53) refers to Theophrastus and Diocles. Discussion and further references in Waegemann, *Amulet and Alphabet,* 93.

[99] The identification of the stone in modern mineralogical terms is problematic; tourmaline, hyacinth, and amber have all been suggested. For these aspects see Caley and Richards, *Theophrastus on Stones,* 109-113. After considering the evidence both ancient and modern, the authors choose amber (or some form of it) as the best identification. Another view is that it is a yellow and brown tourmaline: see Eichholz, *Theophrastus De lapidibus,* 108. The text itself is not entirely sound, however, and several important emendations have been suggested. On the uses of amber in this context, see John Riddle, "Amber in Ancient Pharmacy," *Pharmacy in History* 15 (1973), 3-17.

[100] *Kyranides* 1.11.1, 5, 14, 18, 20; Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 1.83. See also Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet,* 90-91.

[101] In this case it is similar to amber: Caley and Richards, *Theophrastus on Stones,* 113; 116-117.

[102] Other stones have "male" and "female" distinctions. Cf. Theophrastus *De lapidibus* 30-31 on σάρδιον and κύανος.

[103] Theophrastus *De lapidibus* 31.

power of the stone.[104] Other written sources indicate the ancient concept of the dryness of the male and the moistness of the female,[105] and Pliny describes the male-produced stone as red and fiery (*fulveum et igneum*).[106] Thus the male dryness and female moistness inherent in the animal sources of λιγγούριον were thought to be transferred even to the altered substance of which the "stone" was composed as important elements contributing to its efficacy. While the relationship between the supposed animal source of λιγγούριον and its perceived efficacy is based on primarily magical considerations, the essential concept applies to the specific constituents of medically efficacious substances derived from both animal and vegetable sources as well. For example, the various ingredients contained in medicinal wines were considered important for bringing about bring the particular results expected from ingestion. Similarly, Dioscorides' account of wines relies on this concept.[107]

Because of its thematic incorporation of magical concepts into the text itself, the *Satyrica* affords us an exceptional opportunity to uncover literary evidence for how the ancients viewed the powers attributed to natural substances and to the sympathetic influences that emanate from them. One passage in particular is significant in this regard. At this juncture in the text, Eumolpus, sententiously describing the decline of art, recalls the noble efforts of the philosopher-scientists of old, among whom is depicted Democritus (88.3):

> itaque herbarum omnium succos Democritus expressit et ne lapidum virgultorumque vis lateret, aetatem inter experimenta consumpsit.
>
> And so Democritus pressed out the juices of all kinds of plants and spent his whole life in experiments so that the hidden power of stones and plant slips should not escape notice.[108]

Although this depiction of the philosopher is intended to play a humorous role in the text, Democritus's reputation as a genuine naturalist is attested elsewhere in the ancient evidence.[109] Moreover, the

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[104] Theophrastus *De lapidibus* 28: ὡς...διαφερούσης...καὶ τῆς τοῦ σώματος ὅλως φύσεως, ᾗ ξηρότερον τὸ δ' ὑγρότερον ("Since there is a difference in the nature of their body in general, insofar as there is drier kind and a moister kind").

[105] E.g., Arist. *Problemata* 32.7, 961a.

[106] In particular this has led to the emendation of ψυχρά to πυρρά in the text. See Eichholz, *Theophrastus: De lapidibus*, 108.

[107] Cf. the description of thyme wine in Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 8-9.

[108] Sullivan (*Satyricon*, 204-209) sees in this section close parallels to Senecan philosophical writings. Whether parody or not, the context in which the account appears has little impact upon the fact that these concepts have found expression here.

[109] According to Diogenes Laertius (9.47) Democritus did write a botanical treatise: Αἰτίαι περὶ σπερμάτων καὶ φυτῶν καὶ καρπῶν (*Expostulations About Seeds, Plants,*

mention of Democritus's search for powers hidden in stones and plant slips points to their decidedly magical properties,[110] and it becomes evident that such accounts formed a fairly common tradition about the philosopher. For example, although Pliny discounts the *magicae vanitates* of plants and uses this tradition as a support for his condemnation of the claims made for magical properties, he does report that Democritus had produced a combination of medical ingredients that ensured healthy and lucky offspring.[111] Another tradition holds that Democritus's early training came at the hands of the Magi, those well-known practitioners of sorcery and astrology.[112] This literary portrayal of the philosopher's scientific and systematic interest in the innate properties of the natural world also provides evidence for a commonly held view that the essential and magical powers of vegetation and minerals could be extracted and put to use. In fact, living plants were of particular interest to the ancients because of the various properties (δυνάμεις) ascribed to them by herbalists, scientists, and medical men. Thus, in Theophrastus's account of the generative power (δύναμις γόνιμος) that prompts the unseasonal fruit production of the fig (*De causis plantarum* 5.1.4-5; 5.1.10), the actual capacity for this abnormal activity is said to be contained in a discrete fluid substance that reacts to environmental factors.[113] It is this fluid, thought to be left over from the previous year's fruiting activity, which prompts the plant's premature attempt at the formation and ripening of fruit.

Like its modern counterparts in herbal and magical healing, a belief in the powers of natural substances forms the basis for a folk medical system, evidence for which again surfaces in the literary record. Indeed, modern analysis of folk medical systems furnishes both useful paradigms and striking parallels to the ancient evidence for such systems. Thus, in addition to considerable evidence for popularly held beliefs about the magical properties of stones and plants in the *Satyrica*, there is substantial acknowledgment of a folk medical

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and Fruits). Pliny (*NH* 25.5.13) also mentions his botanical expertise in composing a book on the properties of plants. But according to Walsh (*Roman Novel*, 96 and n.2.) he was not a well-known expert on these subjects, and the depictions of the philosophers and scientists in this section of Petronius are "risibly eccentric." I fail to see how this simple contrast of skill with ineptitude should be taken as a source of humor; the real source of humor, I would suggest, may very well lie in the portrayal of the individual philosopher's intense dedication to his studies and the extremes to which he went in performing his experiments.

[110] I interpret the latter according to LS s.v. *virgultum* def. II: slips, cuttings of trees.

[111] *NH* 26.9.19.

[112] Diogenes Laertius 9.34: οὗτος μάγων τινῶν διήκουσε καὶ Χαλδαίων ("He learned from some *magi* and Chaldaeans"). Cf. Pliny *NH* 25.5.13.

[113] Other adjectival designations at Galen *Mixt.* 3.2.

discourse about impotence in the work as well. For example, prominent incorporation of popular theorizing about the folk medical aspects of sexual dysfunction surfaces with Circe's self-effacing and theatrical lament to her servant after a failed sexual encounter with Encolpius (128.3):

> dic, Chrysis, sed verum: numquid indecens sum? numquid incompta? numquid ab aliquo naturali vitio formam meam excaeco? noli decipere dominam tuam. nescio quid peccavimus.
>
> But tell me the truth, Chrysis: Am I uncomely? Am I dimming my beauty because of some natural defect? Do not deceive your mistress. I have somehow sinned.[114]

Her emphasis on physical considerations in her concerns about the affliction is a familiar one, and this aspect is an even more important factor in the discourse that follows since it directly links both ancient and modern approaches to impotence based on the folk medicinal paradigm. At the beginning of Circe's letter to Encolpius (129.4-9) she ironically suggests that she is not disappointed in his failure to perform and that it was actually a good thing for her.[115] She then inquires into his state of health and whether he reached home safely after their tryst, since according to the current medical diagnosis that she cites, male sexual debility indicates other serious problems as well (129.5):

> quid tamen agas quaero, et an tuis pedibus perveneris domum: negant enim medici sine nervis homines ambulare posse.[116]
>
> Nonetheless I'm interested in how you're doing and whether you got home under your own power, since medical men say that men can't walk without their sexual powers intact.

Her further instructions bid Encolpius take precautions against the affliction that has affected his sexual activity since, like a creeping sickness, it may well spread to the rest of his body (129.6-7):

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[114] Cf. the questions posed by Circe to Encolpius at 128.1. For the theatrical aspects of the entire episode and the differing comedic viewpoints of character and spectator, see Slater, *Reading Petronius,* 124-127. The erotic epistle of comedy may also contribute to the humorous atmosphere in this passage; see Keith Preston, "Some Sources of Comic Effect in Petronius," *CP* 10 (1915), 260-269.

[115] 129.4: *si libidinosa essem, querer decepta; nunc etiam languori tuo gratias ago. in umbra voluptatis diutius lusi* ("If I were a lusty woman, I'd be complaining that I was deceived. Now I even thank you for your inability to perform. I have played rather long in the shade of passion").

[116] For *nervus* used in the plural for the male sexual organ, cf. *Sat.* 131.6: *Dicto citius nervi paruerunt imperio manusque aniculae ingenti motu repleverunt* ("Quicker than it could be said, my organ obeyed her command and filled the hands of the old woman with a large surge"). See also the discussion in Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 38.

> narrabo tibi, adolescens, paralysin cave. numquam aegrum tam magno periculo vidi: medius [fidius] iam peristi. quod si idem frigus genua manusque temptaverit tuas, licet ad tubicines mittas.
>
> I'll tell you, young fellow, watch out for "seizing up." I've never seen a sick man in such a great peril. Heavens! You're a goner. But if this same numbness reaches your hands and your knees, you might as well head for the funeral director.

It is significant that Circe's descriptions of the medical implications of sexual debility include the mention of its possible effects upon a man's ability to walk and of the specific involvement of the knees in the affliction. These associations, as we have seen earlier, are reflective of an ancient and popular belief in the knees as the seat of both male sexuality and of the vital fluid of life itself.[117] Indeed as the ancients themselves recognized, in any state of exhaustion the joints themselves become weary, and the knees in particular, linked with the processes of life, are mentioned in scenes of death.[118]

Nor should the importance of Circe's description of impotence as a type of palsy or paralysis be overlooked, for according to parallel afflictions treated in modern herbal and magical medicinal practice Encolpius's sexual dysfunction may be classed among examples of "unnatural illness," the origins of which lie beyond the scope of natural occurrence and are firmly grounded in the realm of malevolent magic or in the consequences of offenses against divine will.[119] The diagnosis of the sickness, furthermore, points especially to the kind of treatment associated with herbal remedies which are intended to offset the malign influences of magical spells and which often involve the use of plant roots.[120] In this case Encolpius's malady consists of the "hysterical paralysis known as 'fading,' which begins with a numbness in the legs and back that spreads all over the body until the victim is unable to walk. 'Fading' is associated with impotence in men, and the victim's general lack of awareness of the

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[117] See Chapter One, 25.

[118] Onians, *Origins of European Thought,* 190, 180-183.

[119] Of the former perhaps the best known is the evil eye, the belief in which is attested across a wide range of cultures and eras. For a survey of the role of the evil eye in a number of ancient cultures, see Eugene S. McCartney, "Praise and Dispraise in Folklore," in *The Evil Eye: A Casebook,* ed. Alan Dundes (New York: Garland, 1981; reprint, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 9-38. The belief in the malign influence of the evil eye is still widespread, and its harmful physical effects are thought to encompass a wide range of bodily and mental disorders, including impotence. See Wayland D. Hand, "The Evil Eye in Its Folk Medical Aspects: A Survey of North America," in Dundes, *Evil Eye,* 169-180, esp. 173-174.

[120] Matthews, "Doctors and Root Doctors," 78; Payne-Jackson and Lee, *Folk Wisdom,* 10.

world around him (similar to the zombie syndrome in voodoo)."[121]

Circe's disappointment with Encolpius's condition, however, does not prevent her from advising him of a cure. Yet she only suggests the simple and natural remedy of abstinence from sexual activity (129.8):

> quid ergo est? etiamsi gravem inuriam accepi, homini tam misero non invideo medicinam. si vis sanus esse, Gitona roga. recipies, inquam, nervos tuos si triduo sine fratre dormieris.

> What of it, then? Even if I got a slap in the face out of this, I don't begrudge a guy in such a sad state a dose of cure. If you want to get well, Giton is the answer. You'll get back your ready member if you sleep without your lover for three days.

This solution may be seen as an initial response to the disruptions of an individual's mental state, those unnatural "mind problems" deriving from social stresses. In his letter of reply (130.1-6), after putting himself at Circe's mercy for his offense, he acknowledges her warnings about "fading" and its disastrous social consequences (130.6):

> paralysin tamen cavere iubes: tamquam ea maior fieri possit quae abstulit mihi per quod etiam te habere potui.

> You bid me to beware of "seizing up" as though it could become any greater. It has taken away from me the very means by which I could have had you.

Heeding her advice to abstain from sex for three days, Encolpius does avoid contact with Giton.[122] Yet immediately prior to that he undertakes another set of remedies for his condition, and he avoids the temptations of the social atmosphere at the baths and the enervating effects of the complete bath routine.[123] He then prepares his body with dietary remedies for sexual dysfunction in order to ensure success (130.7):

> curavi diligentius noxissimum corpus, balneoque praeterito modica unctione usus, mox validioribus pastus, id est bulbis cochlearumque sine iure cervicibus, hausi parcius merum.

> I took time to better tend to my body: I skipped checking out the

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[121] Matthews, "Doctors and Root Doctors," 69: In the folk medical tradition, "'paralysis or fading'...is a category of magical illness that includes the symptoms of numbness in the feet, legs, hands, and arms; a lack of interest in daily life; loss of appetite; dysphasia; loss of memory; and / or impotence in males."

[122] *Sat.* 130.8: *hinc ante somnum levissima ambulatione compositus sine Gitone cubiculum intravi. tanta erat placandi cura, ut timerem ne latus meum frater convelleret* ("From here, refreshed before sleep by a very light walk, I went to the bedroom without Giton. So great was my concern for pleasing [her] that I was afraid that my lover might get a piece of me").

[123] This is suggested by Evan T. Sage, "Medicine in the Romance of Petronius," *Annals of Medical History*, N.S. 7 (1935), 192-196.

> baths, oiled up only a bit, ate heartier food (bulbs and snails' necks—hold the gravy), and went easy on the hard stuff.

It is his reliance on these cures in particular which attests the currency of medical approaches based on dietary elements. A particularly important aspect of the passage is the emphasis placed on the health-promoting (*validioribus*) characteristics of the meal that Encolpius takes and on his sparing consumption of wine. The latter, of course, was well known for its sexually deadening powers when used to excess although its sexually stimulating properties are lauded as well.[124] Similarly, the two foods mentioned are themselves associated with stimulation; and as I point out in later chapters, visual associations are important factors in this determination. What is revealed in Circe's admonitions and Encolpius's actions in their attempts to find a remedy for impotence, then, is an active integration of remedies drawn from a wide range of conceptual approaches. This is a typical feature of folk medical systems, since such systems are based on the perception that life consisted of an array of corporal, mental, and spiritual elements and that good health resulted from a balanced combination of all of these.[125]

Having established the outlines of the perceptual foundations upon which the folk medical system evidenced in the *Satyrica* is based, in the following chapters I now turn to an examination of how particular associations function within this general conceptual framework. In selectively examining naturally occurring substances from the plant, the animal, and the mineral kingdoms as well as objects fashioned from these sources or incorporating their valuable properties and corresponding images, I intend to make evident how the magically perceived interconnectedness of being, image, and object contributes to the perceived efficacy of impotence treatments. What eventually emerges is a picture of male sexual dysfunction as dependent upon a number of physical and psychic factors, each of which is both derived from and contributory to perceived associations among elements commonly encountered in the natural world. These elements are linked by a perceptual network that associated the male organ with serpent-like plants used in medicine and magic, with serpents themselves and their venom, and with amulet stones whose ability to influence human sexuality is derived from their serpentine characteristics. My investigation of this array of interconnected perceptions begins with plants.

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[124] The evidence in ancient literature for both aspects is extensive, but the characterization of wine as a deterrent to male performance is attested more often. See Hopfner, *Sexualleben*, 295-304.

[125] Matthews, "Doctors and Root Doctors," 70.

CHAPTER THREE

FLORA AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF VIRILITY

Substantial evidence from the ancient world attests cultural perceptions about the natural world and how it was thought to interact with humans, and such associations formed an integral part of the ancient psyche. These often took the form of direct metaphorical identifications with specific organisms as well as of considerably more subtle and esoteric associations. In either case it is now surely impossible ever to visualize completely that intricate web of connotation and suggestion which greeted the ancient intellect as it contemplated the non-human animate world. Nevertheless, it is my belief that by careful inquiry into both the intellectual and material artifacts of ancient classical culture, a considerable part of the network of perception and belief may be uncovered. In this chapter I examine the perceptual links among certain members of the vegetable kingdom as they relate specifically to ancient beliefs about male sexuality.

In order to illustrate my basic approach to these connections and as a guiding principle for the proper interpretation of the technical botanical information that forms the basis for this chapter, I offer the following from a recent investigator of plant names in modern Greece:

> Above all we must keep before us continually what were the ideas of the people who have through the ages used these names [of plants]; what were their attitudes to the plants which they saw and gathered and used for the ordinary purposes of their daily life.[1]

To this I would suggest two additional points of my own. The first consideration, and one specific to this discussion, concerns my approach to the botanical material. It is simply stated: while I will have the opportunity to survey plants associated with male sexuality in general, because of their vast number and wide application in methods scientific, magical and popular, I must necessarily be selective. Furthermore, I will limit the discussion to those specific plants which are directly or indirectly associated with the male genitalia, specifically the erect penis, and to their role in the treatment of male sexual dysfunction.

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[1] R. M. Dawkins, "The Semantics of Greek Names for Plants," *JHS* 56 (1936), 11.

The other important consideration involves the difficulty in identifying ancient plants with modern, scientifically named specimens. Thus, any discussion of specific plants and their presumed counterparts in the modern Linnaean taxonomy must always be approached with caution since clearly inaccurate identifications have sometimes found their way into standard lexicographical works.[2] Nevertheless, the majority of plants recorded in ancient writings are identifiable at least as far as the classification level of the genus.[3] On the other hand, as far as what the ancients themselves named plants, there is no guarantee of consistency either. As Gow and Scholfield have pointed out, the ancient classifications of plants and animals are primarily dependent upon

> similarities of appearance or habit which a modern systematist might in many cases dismiss as superficial and irrelevant. A single name is likely to be used for resembling species and even for members of different genera which have some conspicuous quality in common; varieties may be taken for species and be given distinct names.[4]

In other words, we must recognize subtle and complex associations among plants beyond a strictly conceived and exclusively scientific approach. Accordingly, in this investigation I concentrate on those human perceptions of plants which are based primarily on elements of visual identification combined with a popular belief in their efficacious properties (δυνάμεις). These two factors often mutually interact to establish an awareness of any given plant that practically amounts to ascribing it an individual personality. The resultant combination of vegetative properties and perceived qualities deriving from an anthropocentric comprehension of the natural world, moreover, presents some striking associations that surface in the literary record.

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[2] See Scarborough, "Pharmacology," 163-164 n. 2, where the "Index of Plants" in the Loeb edition of Theophrastus's *Historia plantarum* is singled out as a particularly egregious offender.

[3] Jerry Stannard, "Squill in Ancient and Medieval Materia Medica, with Special Reference to Its Employment for Dropsy," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 50.6 (June 1974), 684. For Greek names Dawkins ("Semantics," 7) advises additional caution, since the similarity of a modern name to an ancient name guarantees no more than that the two specimens share some noticeable characteristic.

[4] Gow and Scholfield, *Nicander*, 19; Riddle (*Disocorides on Pharmacy*, xxv-xxvi) gives a brief overview of standard references for Discorides' plants in modern terminology. A confusion similar to that described is evident even among modern common names for wild and roadside plants. For example, in much of eastern North America the commonly encountered day lily (*Hemerocallis fulva*), a non-native escape now widely established, is often popularly (and mistakenly) called tiger lily. The latter (properly *Lilium tigrinum*) is a member of an entirely different genus and itself a garden escape, although much less frequently encountered in the wild. A somewhat similar situation exists in the case of the so-called skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus*

As Ann Michelini has demonstrated,[5] one of the most striking of these associations originates with the concept of the excessiveness of rampant plant growth familiar from the world of agriculture which has significant parallels in the world of human activity. Both Aristotle and Theophrastus specify this overreaching tendency of certain plants by using the verbs ὑβρίζειν and ἐξυβρίζειν, verbal equivalents of the familiar noun ὕβρις.[6] Both authors, furthermore, use the verbs to indicate the result of an overabundance of growth caused by excessive nourishment,[7] and in this connection it can be linked to the concept of satiety (κόρος), closely associated with ὕβρις in the sphere of human activity. In fact, the two have been seen as equivalents.[8]

The result of this type of luxuriant vegetative growth is called "goating" (τραγᾶν) by Theophrastus (*HP* 4.14.6, *CP* 5.9.10-13), and the term designates the adverse effects of such abnormality on a plant's productivity that results in excessive foliage and floral production but no appreciable fruit.[9] The verb itself is the equivalent of τραγίζειν, meaning literally "to be the he-goat,"[10] and both verbs have specifically sexual meanings and exhibit parallels with a number of other verbs derived from nouns designating male animals. For example, Aristotle uses both ταυρᾶν ("to desire the bull") and καπρᾶν ("to desire the boar") to describe the sexual attraction that the female of the species feels for the male, and this overt sexual association is particularly prominent in the case of the former, since the noun ταῦρος may stand for both the male organ and the female pubic region in literary and medical works.[11] Terms such as these are used in a wider sense for the general tendency to lust or lechery

foetidus), which is actually an aroid (family *Araceae*) and no relative of cabbage at all.

[5] Ann Michelini, "HYBRIΣ and Plants," *HSCP* 82 (1978), 35-44. The importance of this study to the present investigation is such that a substantial overview is essential.

[6] Michelini, "HYBRIΣ," 36-37 n. 7.

[7] For example, Aristotle *De generatione animalium* 725b35: αἵ διὰ τὴν τροφὴν ἐξυβρίζουσιν ("These wax overly luxuriant because of feeding").

[8] See Michelini, "HYBRIΣ," 36 n. 5 on the relationship between the terms and pertinent references that lead her to conclude that "the interchangeability of the two terms suggests their virtual equivalence."

[9] Michelini, "HYBRIΣ," 38. Sexuality is not emphasized enough, I think, in Michelini's discussion. In the human sphere, for example, *hybris* may represent excessive sexuality. See Douglas M. MacDowell, "*Hybris* in Athens," *GR* 23 (1976), 17.

[10] Cf. Galen, 14.57: ὀσμῆς εἶδος τραγίζον ("smelling like a goat").

[11] *HA* 6.18.12, 572a: αἱ δὲ βόες ταυρῶσιν ("Cows want the bull"); *HA* 6.18.8, 572b: καὶ αἱ ὕες δ' ὅταν ἔχωσι πρὸς τὴν ὀχείαν ὁρμητικῶς, ὃ καλεῖται καπρᾶν... ("And whenever swine are eager for impregnation, this is called 'to want the boar'"). See Françoise Skoda, *Médecine Ancienne et Métaphore*, (Paris: Peeters / Selaf, 1988), 159-160 for citations about the male organ; for the *mons Veneris*, 170-171 with n. 408.

in women,[12] while from the supposed promiscuity of mares an even more vivid term, ἱππομανεῖν ("to be mad for the stallion"), is derived, one that clearly equates the sexual drive with a wantonly lascivious madness.[13] In the plant world the similar term φυλλομανεῖν ("to go into leaf madness") describes the overnourished, rampant growth of cereal grains in rich soil (Theophrastus *HP* 8.7.4). It is synonymous with τραγᾶν and expresses the same concepts of excessive vegetative growth and of reproductive activity without resultant fruit; for grains grazing and early cutting are preventative. Likewise, in the case of the grapevine (ὁ ἄμπελος) terms such as τραγᾶν to describe the tendency are especially appropriate since the vine is notorious for its vigorous growth and requires severe pruning to avoid sterility and to produce fruit.[14] A plant thus restrained is stripped of those innate tendencies that ordinarily result in the impulse to put "self-aggrandizement before the performance of the social role assigned."[15]

While the excessive growth of certain plants like the vine results in poor fruit production, the opposite is true of other plants whose innate properties (δυνάμεις) prompt an excessive formation of fruit. Such a tendency may be associated with sexuality as well. For example, the influence of sexual and generative power (δύναμις γόνιμος) associated with plant growth obtains in the case of the early and unseasonable fruiting of the fig-tree mentioned earlier which Theophrastus attributed to an excess of generative fluid left over in fruiting branches after the previous year's fruit production.[16] Activated by heat and moisture, this residue prompts the abnormal formation of abortive fruits on old growth *behind* the newly forming leaf rather than in the usual fruiting location in the leaf joints (axils) *ahead* of the leaf as is the case in normal and seasonal fruit production.[17] The fig thus formed rarely reaches maturity despite the efforts

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[12] E.g., Aristophanes *Plut.* 1024: καπρῶσα γραῦς ("a boar-horny old woman"). Further discussion in Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 106-107.

[13] *HA* 6.18, 572a: αἱ μὲν οὖν ἵπποι αἱ θήλειαι ἱππομανοῦσιν· ὅθεν καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν βλασφημίαν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτων ἐπιφέρουσιν ἀπὸ μόνου τῶν ζῴων τούτου ἐπὶ τῶν ἀκολάστων περὶ τὸ ἀφροδισιάζεσθαι ("Female horses, then, go into 'mare madness' on which account from this one alone of living things people give a name to the charge against those women who are licentious in sexual behavior"). Note also *HA* 6.22, 577a for the discussion of the aphrodisiac substance ἱππομανές.

[14] Michelini, "HYBΡΙΣ," 39 n. 12 and references, especially Theophrastus *HP* 2.7.2. Cf. the use of καθυλομανεῖν ("to run all to wood") to describe the sexuality of a woman who needs to be "pruned back" (ἐπικόπτοιτο) to keep her faithful. See Wesley D. Smith, ed. and trans., *Hippocrates: Pseudepigraphic Writings*, Studies in Ancient Medicine, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 64.

[15] Michelini, "HYBΡΙΣ," 38-39.

[16] See Chapter Two, 93.

[17] Theophrastus also states (*CP* 5.1.9) that these premature fruits (πρόδρομοι) can occur down the branch far from the proper fruiting location.

of the tree itself to effect the ripening process. Growth habit also contributes to this production of premature fruit since it is the nature of the fig-tree to be succulent and prone to early budding.[18] Human intervention in the form of proper maintenance of the tree, moreover, can have a salubrious effect on fruit production as well.[19] In this way the fig-tree can be considered sexually overreaching, with an excess of an active internal principle that results in untimely production of monstrous fruits. Like the hybristic growth of the grapevine, the fig-tree stands as a paradigm for human activity.

Other associations identify plants directly with the physical aspects of the human world as well, and these connections frequently appear as vegetable imagery in works literary, scientific, and medical.[20] In purely literary works such as Greek lyric, for example, vegetation images in general and floral images in particular often represent a recurrent theme of physical attraction, erotic awakening, and arousal. Thus in the poetry of Sappho references to the rose (βρόδον) and to other flowers often evoke romance and passion.[21] Elsewhere, the sexually charged word χλωρός, a term associated with the rising flush of sexual desire, plays an important role in Sappho's famous poem (31) in which the narrator describes how she grows "more vibrant than grass" (χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας) at the sight of her beloved.[22] Considerably more concrete metaphorical representations of the association between the world of plants and female sexuality are found among Sapphic fragments as well. In Fr. 105a, for example, the word "apple" (μᾶλον) represents both the female organ of sexual response and the wider social compass of feminine sexuality as it exists separately from that of world of the male:[23]

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[18] *CP* 5.1.6: φύσις ὑγρά τις οὖσα καὶ προβλαστής ("being of a moist nature and early to bud"). Cf. *HP* 1.14.3 where distinctions are made between early and late sprouting and fruiting types of plants. Yet Theophrastus also asserts that it is the weakened fig-tree that produces premature fruits and that this is the cause of improper ripening (*CP* 5.1.7).

[19] See discussion at *CP* 5.1.10.

[20] For example, see Henderson, *Maculate Muse,* 41 on βάλανος ("acorn"), which is widely recognized as a symbol for the penis. Further examples in Skoda, *Médecine Ancienne,* 161-164.

[21] T. McEvilley, "Sapphic Imagery and Fr. 96," *Hermes* 101 (1973), 257-278. Cf. Winkler, "Double Consciousness," 182-186.

[22] For a larger discussion of the significance of vegetal freshness and moistness as represented by χλωρός, see Eleanor Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974), 31-78 and especially 65-68. The word's sexual connections are also made with the fresh moistness of the grass that grows as Zeus and Hera make love (*Il.* 14.347). See also Onians, *Origins of European Thought,* 177-178 n. 9. For χλωρός specifically applied to plants, see Alice E. Kober, *The Use of Color Terms in the Greek Poets* (Geneva, New York: W. F. Humphrey Press, 1932), 111-113.

[23] Winkler, "Double Consciousness," 180-184.

οἶον τὸ γλυκύμαλον ἐρεύθεται ἄκρῳ ἐπ' ὔσδῳ,
ἄκρον ἐπ' ἀκροτάτῳ, λελάθοντο δὲ μαλοδρόπηες·
οὐ μὰν ἐκλελάθοντ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐδύναντ' ἐπίκεσθαι.

Just as the sweet apple grows blush-red on the bough tip
At its topmost point, and the pickers have failed to reach it.
Nor do they completely forget it but are unable to attain it.

Indeed, through their metaphorical language drawn from the plant world such poems lay out a social and ethical framework of behavior and emphasize the inherent oppositions of maidenhood and sexual maturity.[24]

Metaphorical identifications as the latter may be seen as examples of the so-called "Doctrine of Signatures," whereby the association was made between the structural appearance of a naturally occurring object or organism such as a stone or a plant and some perceived effect upon a correspondingly similar human organ or condition.[25] Just such a suggestion based on a structural similarity was made by the ancients in the case of roots with a long, tapering appearance characteristic of certain members of the carrot family (*Umbelliferae*).[26] As this is the one characteristic shared by the types of plants I want especially to consider, an exact identification of each individual plant is not important for purposes of this investigation.[27] Pliny, for example, describes the *staphylinus* as having the power to repel serpents when carried as an amulet,[28] to cure snakebite when eaten, and to act as an aphrodisiac (*NH* 20.15.30-32); Dioscorides

[24] See Lyn Hatherly Wilson, *Sappho's Sweetbitter Songs* (London: Routledge, 1996), 81 and 95-98. Wilson specifies frgs.105a and 105c as representative of virginity and 107 and 114 of sexual maturity.

[25] Jerry Stannard, "Medical Plants and Folk Remedies in Pliny *Historia Naturalis*," *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 4.1 (1982), 14.

[26] The similarity of the root to the elongated prong of a garden dibble, *pastinum*, has been suggested as the source of the Latin *pastinaca*. See Alfred C. Andrews, "The Carrot as a Food in the Classical Era," *CP* 44 (1949), 187 n. 40 and references there.

[27] Pliny describes different kinds at *NH* 19.37.88-38.90. See also Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 3.72 and Columella *Res rusticae* 10.168 and 9.4.5. The actual identification of the individual plants discussed is problematic; they are best considered simply as types of parsnip or carrot. Athenaeus (9.371b) reports that Phanias enumerated the varieties of umbelliferous plants. While the *Umbelliferae* seem not to have been carefully distinguished, the terminology of the carrot is important because of it is exemplary of the semantic changes common to the names of many plants used as food by the ancients. For a thorough though somewhat involved discussion of these matters, see Alfred C. Andrews, "Carrot as Food," 182-196. See also Jacques André, *Les Noms de Plantes dans la Rome Antique* (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1985), 87, s.v. *daucus*.

[28] The aroma of the plant may have had something to do with its serpent-repelling qualities; however, the concept of *antipathia*, a natural aversion, lies behind this concept as well. See Tavenner, *Studies in Magic*, 95-96.

(*De mat. med.* 3.52) adds that other parts of the plant give protection from a variety of bites and stings.[29] Nicander (*Ther.* 843) includes it among the remedies for the bites of poisonous animals, and a similar plant, *siser erraticum,* is claimed by Pliny to be a sexual stimulant also (*NH* 20.17.34). These perceptions are echoed by Athenaeus (9.317b); quoting Diphilus, he reports that σταφυλῖνος was used as a love philtre.[30] The presumably related δαῦκον is said by Theophrastus to be warming by nature and is included among drug plants (*HP* 9.20.2).[31] In general, the commonly encountered ancient perception of the various kinds of carrot-like plants is one of bitterness and heat in both taste and aroma.[32] The ability to cause digestive difficulties (δύσπεπτος) and a resultant flatulence (πνευματώδης) is also attributed to such plants.

Significantly for the present discussion, these latter characteristics are also found in other plants whose presumed influence upon male sexuality made them especially well known to the population at large. The foremost distinguishing feature of this latter group is an enlarged underground structure from which emerge upward both leaves and floral organs. Because of this feature such plants are grouped under the general terms βολβοί and *bulbi.* The terms themselves do not designate one particular family, genus, or even species of plant as might be identified according to modern standards of Linnaean nomenclature. Rather they are generic terms referring to any rounded and tunicate (sheathed) underground plant structure; among the ancients the name can designate a number of quite unrelated plants, including lilies, squills, aroids, and even reeds.[33] For ex-

[29] ὁ καρπὸς...ἁρμόζει...πρὸς θερίων δὲ δήγματα καὶ πληγάς· τοὺς δὲ προλαβόντας φασὶ μὴ ἀδικεῖσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν ἑρπέτων ("The fruit is good for bites and stings of wild creatures; and they say that those who grasp onto it beforehand do not suffer injury from serpents").

[30] καὶ ὑπ' ἐνίων φίλτρον καλεῖται ("And by some it is called a love charm").

[31] Heating properties are mentioned by later medical writers as well, e.g., Oribasius *Coll. med.* 3.14.7.

[32] An etymology for δαῦκον has been drawn from δαίω ("to light, kindle, burn"). See Andrews, "Carrot as Food," 185; Σ Nicander *Theriaca* 94.

[33] *TLG* s.v. βολβός: *Omnes etiam radices rotundae et tunicatae, ut lilii, croci, squillae, arundinum et similes aliae,* βολβοί *dicuntur.* Cf. W. T. Thistelton-Dyer, "On Some Ancient Plant Names II," *JP* 34 (1915), 94: "To a Greek βολβός would only mean an edible root..." On lilies in particular see Pliny *NH* 21.11.24-12.25. The reference to the underground part of the *arundo* (reed) seems only to be to its propagative "eye," since according to L. H. Bailey (*A Manual of Cultivated Plants* [New York: MacMillan, 1951], 159), *Arundo donax* (Giant Reed) has not a rounded root but rather grows "from a horizontal knotty rootstock." Cf. Pliny *NH* 17.33.144 and Columella *Arb.* 29.1. For the the Latin *bulbus* the *OLD* suggests that in culinary contexts the onion is especially meant; but see also Jacques André, *Lexique des Termes de Botanique en Latin* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1956), 60-61, where a wider variety of meanings for the term is outlined more specifically.

ample, Pliny uses the word *bulbus* to describe a variety of roots, including the Egyptian *arum* (family *Araceae*), while Dioscorides writes of an edible kind, an emetic variety, and the wild variety known as κολχικόν.[34] Again, however, since the exact identification of any particular plants classed as βολβοί/*bulbi* is of secondary importance in this investigation, I will not necessarily denote the terms to indicate specific plants unless the identification is obvious from lexical information or from context. The emphasis here, as with the other plants discussed earlier, is rather on ancient perceptions of these specimens and their actual uses in the world of human activity.

In this regard several related cultivated and wild plants that the ancients included among "bulbs" stand out, and the following discussion will focus on the two closely allied taxonomic groups to which these plants belong, the amaryllis family (*Amaryllidaceae*) and the lily family (*Liliaceae*).[35] Because in an agriculturally based society a considerable part of the population ordinarily has close and regular contact with plants throughout their growing cycle and because the ancients considered such plants as a primary food source for all classes, certain varieties of these bulbous plants appear with marked frequency in the literary record. Upon inspection the reason for the connection of such plants to human sexuality becomes evident: several members of these families are found to be regularly linked in ancient culture with the male sexual organ because of visual similar-

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[34] Pliny *NH* 19.30.93-97; Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 2.170 (βολβός ἐδώδιμος), 4.156 (βολβός ἐμετικός); 4.83 (κολχικόν = βολβός ἄγριος). We can discount the sea squill (σκίλλη, *Urginea maritima*) as a candidate in any purely stimulative remedies; it was a strong diuretic and a purgative seemingly unsuited for consumption except as a medicine. See H. S. Steier, "Σκίλλα," *RE* 3A.1.522-526. In the few recorded instances of its use for alimentary purposes, the leaves seem to have been the part of the plant meant for inclusion in a salad, on which see Stannard, "Squill in Ancient and Medieval Materia Medica," 687-688. Further information on the plant's many uses appears in D. L. Cowen, "Squill in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine* 50.6 (June 1974), 714-722.

[35] Common members of the former include the varieties of narcissus and the familiar potted amaryllis among others; of the latter, the lily-of-the-valley, tulips, cultivated lilies, and a host of spring wild flowers. The two families share many characteristics. For the chief difference between the two families, Bailey (*Manual*, 242) emphasizes the inferior ovary of the former while J. Hutchinson (*The Families of Flowering Plants*, 2nd ed., vol. 2 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959], 639) puts a greater emphasis upon the type of floral structure ("*umbellate* with an *involucre of bracts*"—emphasis original) and places the genus *Allium* among the *Amaryllidaceae*. There is still considerable debate about the assignation of certain genera, however, and the taxonomy is far from established. See now Wendy B. Zomlefer, *Guide to Flowering Plant Families* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 274-275 (Table 19) and 395 (Appendix B) where *Allium* and related genera are now grouped into their own family, the *Alliaceae*. Cf., however, 394 (Appendix A).

ities at specific stages in their growth.[36] In particular, these types of plants exhibit a distinctive floral structure that prompts an association with the erect penis. While all of these related plants exhibit this feature to some degree, it is especially noticeable in the case of the genus *Allium,* which includes a number of familiar garden vegetables and flowers; perhaps the most common of these are garlic (Gr. σκόροδον, Lat. *allium*) and the onion (Gr. κρόμμυον, Lat. *cepa*).[37] Nonetheless, in many contexts an exact identification, even in terms recognizable to the ancients themselves, remains problematic and a cautious approach in this regard is again advisable.[38]

In terms of sexuality and sexual stimulation, moreover, the repute of bulbous plants was widespread, and it spans the whole range of classical literary and scientific writing. Edible bulbs of some kind are mentioned frequently;[39] and an overview of the general category as a stimulative food is afforded by Athenaeus,[40] some of whose citations I treat in more detail below. In addition to cultivated bulbs like garlic and onion, one particular plant, the tassel hyacinth (*Muscari comosum*), was a favorite wild food with especially stimulative powers ascribed to it and was often included in a dietary regimen to promote male sexual activity.[41] Like Encolpius's restorative meal (*Sat.* 130.7) discussed in the previous chapter, the bulbs of *M. comosum* are still today considered a healthy meal.[42]

Of numerous examples of bulbs in literature associated with male stimulation, perhaps the most illustrative passage is from Aristophanes where a young man is urged by two randy crones to resort to βολβοί to increase his sexual abilities (*Eccles.* 1091-1092):

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[36] On this point Winkler (*Constraints of Desire,* 80), in focusing solely on orchids, has made the commonly encountered error in assuming that the primary reason for the whole category of *bulbi* to be associated with male sexuality is because of a visual association with the testicles.

[37] Other species include chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), a large number of decorative species for the flower garden, and numerous wild European varieties such as the wild leek (*A. ampeloprasum*) and Naples garlic (*A. neapolitanum*), on which see Oleg Polunin and Anthony Huxley, *Flowers of the Mediterranean* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965), 210-212 and figs. 249-251.

[38] Jacques André, *L'Alimentation et La Cuisine à Rome* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1961), 20 (suggesting that the term *bulbi* in food contexts does not necessarily refer to onions).

[39] For a list of pertinent passages see Eric Csapo, "Deep Ambivalence: Notes on a Greek Cockfight (Parts II-IV)," *Phoenix* 47.2 (1993), 116 n. 134.

[40] 2.63d-2.64f.

[41] Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 2.170, Theophrastus *HP* 7.12.1. Cf. Athenaeus 2.64e, where bulbs are said to be edible only with a variety of other foods to enhance taste, including cheese, honey, and onions.

[42] André, *L'Alimentation,* 20-21. Snails are often part of the meal as well according to Baumann (*Die Griechischen Pflanzenwelt,* 133-134). Cf. figs. 263-264.

Νε. πῶς οὖν δικωπεῖν ἀμφοτέρας δυνήσομαι;
Γρ. καλῶς. ἐπειδὰν καταφάγῃς βολβῶν χύτραν.

Young Man: "How then will I be able to work both vessels with my one oar?"
Old Woman: "Easily. Whenever you eat a kettle of bulbs."

Similar beliefs about their stimulative properties are echoed by Martial (*Ep.* 13.34):

Cum sit anus coniunx et sint mortua membra,
nil aliud bulbis quam satur esse potes.

Since your spouse is an old woman and your equipment is dead,
In no wise other than with bulbs can you get satisfied

As we have seen elsewhere (*Ep.* 3.75) Martial also praises *bulbi* as *salaces* and thus a cure for impotence.[43] Noteworthy as well is Columella's praise of *bulbi* from both Megara and Africa, which he, like Martial, associates with the rocket (*eruca*),[44] another plant highly regarded as a male stimulant and which he places in the company of Priapus himself (*De re rustica* 10.105-109):

quaeque viros acuunt armantque puellis,
iam Megaris veniant genitalia semina bulbi,
et quae Sicca legit Getulis obruta glebis,
et quae frugifero seritur vicina Priapo,
excitet ut Veneri tardos eruca maritos.

And now let come plants to sharpen men and equip them for girls:
The productive seeds of bulbs from Megara,
And that which Sicca chooses covered with Getulian clods,
And what is sown nearby to fruitful Priapus,
The eruca, that it might spark listless husbands to sex.

Ovid also makes the connection with Megarian bulbs in a similar, though clearly not horticultural, context as he gives advice on how to overcome unrequited love by avoiding physical stimulation (*Rem. Am.* 797-800):

Daunius, an Lybicis bulbus tibi missus ab oris,
an veniat Megaris, noxius omnis erit;
nec minus erucas aptum vitare salaces
et quicquid Veneri corpora nostra parat.

A bulb will harm you whether it is from Daunia
Or comes sent from Libyan shores or from Megara.

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[43] See Chapter One, 44.
[44] *Brassica eruca*, a member of the mustard family (*Cruciferae*).

Nor is it any less suitable to avoid the randy eruca
And whatever gets our bodies up for lovemaking.

Yet while the general category of *bulbi* figures prominently as physically stimulative and while there will be further occasion to examine the role of several kinds in male sexuality, for purposes of this investigation one of the most fertile areas for understanding the sexual aspects of the group is the depiction of the garlic plant (*Allium sativum*) in Old Comedy. In many instances references to garlic in Aristophanes are directly associated with male sexual arousal, and these exhibit a substantial range of verbal expression and word play.[45] The imagistic significance of some of these terms was treated a generation ago by Taillardat in his general overview of Aristophanic imagery,[46] and two more recent examinations have discussed garlic's function in Old Comedy in both a literary and an anthropological light as well.[47] Yet despite the efforts of these recent contributions, what has been entirely overlooked and what has not been adequately discussed or correctly interpreted to date is this: that the basis for any sexual association of the garlic plant and for its specific identification with the erect male organ is not, as in the case of the orchis discussed earlier, the underground bulb-like clove cluster of garlic harvested for food (ἄγλις or γέλγις) but rather the living

[45] While it is not the only word used to designate garlic in extant Old Comedy (e.g., ἄγλις at *Ach.* 763 and *Vesp.* 680, equated in LSJ with γέλγις as "*spica* or *nucleus alii*" and presumably meaning the underground clove cluster of the plant), the word σκόροδον is relatively common in Aristophanes, occurring a total of twenty times in the extant plays: *Ach.* 164, 165, 521, 550, 761 (twice), 813, 831; *Equ.* 600; *Vesp.* 679, 1172; *Pax* 258, 502, 1000; *Lys.* 690; *Thesm.* 494; *Ran.* 555, 987; *Eccl.* 404; *Plut.* 718. Derivative nouns and related terms occur also: the diminutive σκορόδιον (*Plut.* 818); σκοροδάλμη, a garlic sauce, (*Equ.* 199, 1095); and the comic compound σκοροδοπανδοκευτριαρτοπώλιδες (*Lys.* 458). Similarly, a form of the verb σκοροδίζειν ("to dose with garlic") appears once: *Equ.* 946 (ἐσκορόδισας); and its perfect passive participle ἐσκοροδισμένος ("having been dosed with garlic") occurs in two passages: *Ach.* 166, *Equ.* 494. The adjective σκοροδομίμητος ("resembling garlic") is found in a fragment of the *Aiolosikon* (= Kock 5, KA 5).

[46] Jean Taillardat, *Les Images d'Aristophane: Études de Langue et de Style* (Paris: Société d' Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1962), 41, 133-134, 209-210.

[47] Robin Seager, "Aristophanes *Thes.* 493-496 and the Comic Possibilities of Garlic," *Ph* 127 (1983), 139-142. Seager suggests that the women in the *Thesmophoriazusae* (494) use garlic as a "remedy" to disguise extramarital affairs. A much more comprehensive investigation of the role of garlic in Aristophanes as a sexual stimulant associated with aggression is found in Csapo, "Ambivalence (II-IV)," 115-120. Unfortunately, Csapo's specific investigation of garlic, despite sound scholarship in some quarters, is seriously deficient in others and warrants correction. Most obvious is Csapo's botanical confusion: as we have already seen (n. 34 supra), the *Liliaceae* comprise a *family* of plants and not, as (Csapo, "Ambivalence [II-IV]," 116) contends, a genus, the former division being a substantially more inclusive and diverse grouping of plants.

green plant itself as it appears above the soil surface and, more specifically, the plant's floral structure. In the following discussion, then, I re-survey some of the literary landscape previously charted with a view to refining the conclusions of earlier scholarly investigations and to illustrating the perceptual paradigms of popular beliefs rooted in the natural world.

It is in Aristophanes' earliest extant play, *Acharnians*, that references to garlic are most prominent and where such references resound with suggestions of male sexuality and aggression.[48] At the core of this connotative resonance is the verb σκορδίζειν which, in addition to its familiar association with the aggressiveness of fighting cocks "primed" with garlic prior to combat, prominently reinforces the close association of the garlic plant with sexuality, especially when the verb bears decidedly obscene connotations as well.[49] This intersection of connotations first becomes evident when the main character Dikaiopolis encounters rowdy Thracian mercenaries, which results in their theft of his lunch and his spirited exchange with their leader Theoros. During their verbal parry Dikaiopolis questions the effectiveness of the boisterous soldiery with explicit mockery, and he specifies their sexually aroused condition with a metaphor drawn from from the familiar world of agriculture (157-158):

> εἰπέ μοι τουτὶ τί ἦν;
> τίς τῶν Ὀδομάντων τὸ πέος ἀποτεθρίακεν;
>
> Tell me, what is all this?
> Who's skinned those Odomanteans' stalks?

While the imagery clearly depicts the appearance of the erect and emergent male organ (τὸ πέος),[50] it also verbally emphasizes the action of exposing the erect phallus from its surrounding skin.[51] The

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[48] Such associations and social considerations as well exist in Roman contexts. See Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 290-294 and 296-298 where the plant is linked as well to the content of iambic poetry.

[49] For the importance of the cockfight as a paradigm for the social order in classical Athens, see Eric Csapo, "Deep Ambivalence: Notes on a Greek Cockfight (Part I) *Phoenix* 47.1 (1993), 1-28 and "Ambivalence (II-IV)," 115 and 120-124. Cf. also Xen. *Symp.* 4.9: ἔνιοι τοὺς ἀλεκτρυόνας σκόροδα σιτίσαντες συμβάλλουσιν ("Some put gamecocks together after they have fed them garlic"). For the concept of how obscene connotations operate (in this case with Aristophanes' mention of garlic), see T. M. De Wit-Tak, "The Function of Obscenity in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* and *Ecclesiazusae*," *Mnemosyne* 21 (1968), 358.

[50] On the graphic nature of πέος see Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 108.

[51] According to LSJ θρῖον is the fig leaf proper *or* an omelette-like meal wrapped in a fig leaf. Since θρῖον can simply mean a leaf, for the pulling back of the foreskin I would suggest here very similar visual imagery seen in a synonym from Theophrastus (*HP* 7.12.2): ἀποφυλλίζειν ("to strip the leaves from a plant"). In order to

image of a hand encircling a plant stem, pulling downward, stripping away the foliage, and exposing a bare and leafless stalk, moreover, accentuates its visually graphic shock value.[52]

This obscene description of licentious excitation is echoed a few lines later when Theoros explains to Dikaiopolis the soldiers' exorbitant pay scale and equates their military prowess with their proclivity to sexual violence (159-160):

> τούτοις ἐάν τις δύο δραχμὰς μισθὸν διδῷ,
> καταπελτάσονται τὴν Βοιωτίαν ὅλην.
>
> If someone would give these guys two drachmas pay,
> They'll spear-rape all of Boeotia.[53]

In reply Dikaiopolis directly identifies them with aggressively erect organs (161):[54]

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explain the image of pulling back the forsekin, however, Henderson (*Maculate Muse*, 118) refers to pulling back the "petals" of the fig. Henderson must be mistaken here if he suggests that there is a visible flower of the fig. On the contrary, the fruit of the fig is not the result of the fertilization of an individual flower, for *Ficus carica* does not have a typical floral structure: its numerous and tiny individual flowers form on the *inside* of a fleshy receptacle (synconium), which eventually becomes the fruit; hence the unseen flowers are without visible petals. Illustrations in Bailey, *Manual*, 336 and B. E. Nicholson, *The Oxford Book of Food Plants* (Oxford: 1969), 95. According to Henderson's interpretation ἀποθριάζειν then must rather mean "to pull back the leaves" as in the unfolding of the fig-leaf omlette; cf. the use of ἐντεθριῶσθαι ("to be wrapped in a fig leaf") to mean "unerect" at *Lys.* 663 and Henderson's comments (*Maculate Muse*, 119). There is also considerable discussion about whether the Thracians were represented as circumcised, erect, or both. See Laura Stone, *Costume in Aristophanic Comedy* (New York: Arno Press, 1981), 82, 102-105, and 112 n. 33 with bibliographical references there. Albert Mueller, *Aristophanis Acharnensis* (Hannover: Rumpler, 1863), 33 suggests an image of pathic soldiers; the suggestion of masturbation is added as well: R. Brunck et al., eds., *Notae in Aristophanem*, 3 vols. (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1829), 1.16-17. K. J. Dover ("Notes on Aristophanes' *Acharnians*," *Maia* 15 [1963], 12) suggests circumcision, even if in a comedic context (cf. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 129). See now also Csapo, "Ambivalence (II-IV)," 118. Objections to this interpretation are dismissed on the grounds of humor and intent. For an example, see J. Van Leeuwen, *Acharnae* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1901), ad loc. and also Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 111 n. 17. In any case, Aristophanes' emphasis on the Thracians' genitalia and their obvious state of arousal is what is ultimately important to my argument.

[52] Csapo ("Ambivalence [II-IV]," 118-119) acknowledges that the "defoliation" imagery indicates that the foreskin is not visible; but he accepts Henderson's interpretation and does not seem to understand the specific imagery of stripping leaves from a stalk.

[53] See Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 123, 136, and 173 for the sexual wordplay on καταπελτάσονται; but note also Csapo's discussion in "Ambivalence (II-IV)," 118 with nn. 140 and 141.

[54] With Henderson (*Maculate Muse*, 110) I take ἀποψωλεῖν ("to pull back the foreskin") to indicate erection. Cf. ψωλή, "a penis ready for intercourse" and note Csapo, "Ambivalence (II-IV)," 118 on the theatrical aspects of the scene and resultant wordplay.

τοισδὶ δύο δραχμὰς τοῖς ἀπεψωλημένοις;

Two drachmas for these hard-ons?

Finally, when the theft of Dikaiopolis's garlic lunch, perhaps itself suggestive of sexual assault,[55] results in his angry denunciation of the Thracians' uncouth behavior, he bemoans his loss at the hands of the randy soldiers, who, when compared to the staunch Athenian oarsman of old, are a picture of overstimulated, sense-driven license.[56]

But it is in Theoros's response to the bitter complaint of Dikaiopolis, resounding with feigned indignation, that the wordplay reaches its peak and where sexuality solidly coalesces with aggression (165-166):

ὦ μόχθηρε σὺ
οὐ μὴ πρόσει τούτοισιν ἐσκοροδισμένοις.

You poor fool,
Don't go near these guys when they're all pumped-up.

In this sexually charged context, the participle ἐσκοροδισμένοις ("having been dosed with garlic") describes the Thracians' aroused state by functioning as the verbal equivalent to the graphic ἀπεψωλημένοις several lines earlier and takes on its some of its obscene identity.[57] This identification complements and enhances the primary association of the verb σκοροδίζειν, that of the "priming" of gamecocks, by introducing both the concept of heat as a physical response to the use of garlic and the overt obscenity recognizable to the audience.[58]

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[55] Seager, "Comic Possibilities," 141.

[56] *Ach.* 162-165:

ὑποστένοι μέντἂν ὁ θρανίτης λεώς,
ὁ σωσίπολις. οἴμοι τάλας, ἀπόλλυμαι,
ὑπὸ τῶν Ὀδομάντων τὰ σκόροδα πορθούμενος.
οὐ καταβαλεῖτε τὰ σκόροδ';

Surely the top-rower, saver of the city,
Might well complain at that. Hell, I've had it,
Looted of my garlic by the Odomanteans.
Hey, why don't you put down that garlic!

[57] Seager, "Comic Possibilities," 141.

[58] On the heat and dryness of garlic, see Csapo, "Ambivalence (II-IV)," 115-116, with sources in nn. 131 and 132. While the scholiast echoes the explanation of Xenophon (*Symp.* 4.9), he also provides additional information about how the procedure affects the gamecocks: ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῶν ἀλεκτρυόνων. τούτοις γὰρ ὅτε μέλλουσι μάχεσθαι σκόροδα δίδοται ἐσθίειν, ἵνα θερμανθέντες ὀξύτεροι γένωνται ("From the metaphor of gamecocks: for when they are about to engage in a fight, garlic is given them to eat so that having been made hotter, they might become

In another passage from Aristophanes, moreover, the sexual element of the verb deriving from this obscene connotation becomes even more apparent, and this emphasis further links the garlic plant with masculine sexuality. Thus, in the exchange between the personified Demos and Paphlagon, at *Equ.* 941-959 the former charges the latter with faithlessness (946):

σὺ δ' ὦ Παφλαγὼν φάσκων φιλεῖν μ' ἐσκορόδισας.

And you Paphlagon, claiming to be in love, gave me the garlic.

The situation bespeaks erotic activity as Demos, portrayed here as the passive partner in a sexual relationship, breaks with his former lover.[59] In his retort to Paphlagon the specific mention of the pretence of love (φασκὼν φιλεῖν), the suggestion of equivalence with a popular obscenity (ἀπεψωλημένοις), and the commonly understood ability of garlic to bring about a physical sensation of heating along with aggression brings the meaning of μ' ἐσκορόδισας much closer in meaning to an expression of physical arousal. As a result, those connotations of σκορδίζειν which echo the aggressiveness of cockfighting or even the suggestion of simple assault proposed by Seager actually play a secondary role in this passage.[60] And while the heat attributed to hot and dry substances like garlic in medical and scientific literature ought not automatically to be equated with sexuality, in this case ἐσκορόδισας does connote that physical effect of the plant on a popular level, especially in light of other physical factors to be discussed below.[61] The suggestion of sexuality is supported by lexical considerations as well. The late lexicographer Hesychius, for exam-

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keener to fight"). Cf. *Pax* 258, where a similar allusion to the aggressiveness of the cockfight plays a part: War (Πόλεμος) has primed his knuckles with garlic to increase his pugnacity.

[59] For Aristophanes' depiction of the sexual relationship of Paphlagon, the Sausage-seller, and Demos, see Henderson, *Maculate Muse*, 68-69: the two former are ἐρασταί while Demos is "a young ἐρώμενος."

[60] Seager, "Comic Possibilities," 141 where a similar (but less tenable) suggestion of sexuality for lines 163-165 is posited. Cf. also *Equ.* 494. A typically outdated translation appears in Van Leeuwen, ed., *Aristophanis Acharnae*, ad loc.: *me exacerbasti; bilem mihi movisti* ("You have enraged me; you have gotten angry at me"). Taillardat's analyses (*Les Images d'Aristophane*, 18, 209-10), while examining the issue in considerable depth, are similar. Csapo ("Ambivalence [II-IV]," 120) gives several alternatives, none of which actually addresses the issue of sexuality, and overlooks Henderson's explanation in favor of an interpretation that emphasizes force.

[61] Indeed, the warming qualities of garlic are documented in well-known medical and scientific literature, including both the Hippocratic corpus: *Acut.* 2.54: σκόροδον θερμὸν ("hot garlic"); and, later, Dioscorides: *De mat. med.* 2.152: δύναμιν δὲ ἔχει σκόροδον...θερμαντικήν ("Garlic has the power of causing heat"). Modern herbal writers also associate garlic with heat and suggest its use as a salve to protect against the heat of the sun. See Maude Grieve, *A Modern Herbal*, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1931; reprint. New York: Dover, 1982), 343.

ple, glosses the verb σκοροδοῦν (lit "to garlic") as συνουσιάζειν ("to have sexual intercourse") and Pollux includes the word in a list of synonyms for sexual activities.[62]

Yet while these factors have been correctly seen as indicating the metaphorical association of garlic with the male organ, this explanation alone completely neglects that important visual connection made in the popular mentality.[63] In the discussion that follows, I address this oversight since obscene connotations indicative of male sexuality accompany other, less acknowledged references to garlic in Aristophanic comedy; these are instrumental in determining the proper relationship between visual imagery and verbal expression. For this purpose yet another incident in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* is particularly illustrative, and it serves to carry the investigation closer to understanding the real significance of the terminology derived from ancient designations for garlic. In his speech describing the background to the events and conditions leading up to the ongoing war between Athens and Sparta (*Ach.* 496-556), Dikaiopolis recounts the story of boisterous Megarian youths who abduct two prostitutes in retaliation for a similar kidnapping by Athenians (523-527):

> καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ σμικρὰ κἀπιχώρια,
> πόρνην δὲ Σιμαίθαν ἰόντες Μεγαράδε
> νεανίαι κλέπτουσι μεθυσκότταβοι·
> κᾆθ' οἱ Μεγαρῆς ὀδύναις πεφυσιγγωμένοι
> ἀντεξέκλεψαν 'Ασπασίας πόρνα δύο·
>
> And even these [prior] matters are just small and local issues:
> For drunken young fellows, heading to Megara,
> Snatched the prostitute Simaitha.
> And then fellows from Megara, swollen in wanton agonies,
> Stole in return two of Aspasia's call girls.

Though the allusions to the contemporary political climate are clear,[64] in this comedic context the passage also exudes an atmos-

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[62] Hesychius *Lex.* s.v.; Pollux *Onomasticon* 5.93. Csapo ("Ambivalence [II-IV]," 120) associates these with the rubbing of garlic on gamecocks.

[63] Cf. Csapo, "Ambivalence (II-IV), 120.

[64] See G. E. M de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), 366. Aspasia, the foreign-born (Milesian) mistress of Pericles, was charged by the comic poets and Pericles' enemies with being a procuress, hence the reference to call girls. See also Keuls, *Reign of the Phallus,* 198. On her supposed involvement with political matters and the outbreak of the war as represented in this passage, see Linda-Marie Günther, "Aspasia und Perikles: Rufmord im Klassischen Athen," in *Reine Männersache? Frauen in Männerdomänen der Antiken Welt,* ed. Maria H. Dettenhofer (Köln: Böhlau, 1994), 55-56. Plutarch (*Pericles* 30.4) discounts the story.

phere of amatory adventure; and an air of intoxicated and unrestricted license (μεθυσκότταβοι) is suffused throughout the whole episode. More to the point, the adventurous youths are graphically described as πεφυσιγγωμένοι ὀδύναις ("swollen in wanton agonies"), and it is this phrase that introduces an even deeper awareness of the association between sexuality and the garlic plant.

Since the presence of a primarily sexual meaning for this phrase has been either overlooked, euphemized, or even suppressed by most earlier commentators, the words in question are usually rendered by some expression linking irritation with spite or anger; in fact, only one recent translator has given the phrase something of its rightful sense.[65] For instance, according to LSJ φυσιγγοῦσθαι, the unattested verb from which the perfect participle πεφυσιγγωμένοι must be derived, shares semantic territory with σκοροδίζειν in referring to that state of excitement associated with the garlic-primed gamecocks, a definition presumably based on the scholiast's interpretation.[66] Similarly, in making the phrase fit this concept, Taillardat would have the abstract noun ὀδύναις ("agonies") stand as a substitute for an expected σκορόδοις.[67] But the interpretation I propose establishes a much closer visual and verbal connection between garlic and sexuality. For the general association we can begin by relying at least partially on ancient authority. According to the *TLG* φυσιγγοῦσθαι means "properly, to grow swollen in the manner of a bladder" (*proprie inturgesco in vesicae modum*). The scholiast, moreover, reports that the perfect participle reflects the actual appearance of garlic since it is derived from φύσιγξ, here explained as the sheath that forms around the underground bulb cluster.[68] Presumably, this interpretation accounts for its similarity in meaning to the passive forms of σκοροδίζειν, as both would emphasize the effects of the

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[65] Jeffrey Henderson, *Aristophanes' Acharnians* (Newburyport, Massachusetts: Focus, 1992), 49: "garlic-stung with passion." Cf. Taillardat, *Les Images d'Aristophane*, 209: "excités par le dépit"; Van Leeuwen, *Aristophanis Acharnae*, ad loc.: *ira inflati*; W. Rennie, ed., *The Acharnians of Aristophanes* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), 166: "primed with resentment." Again Csapo ("Ambivalence [II-IV], 119) also fails to understand the imagery: he renders it "garlic-primed with grief."

[66] LSJ s.v.: "*to be excited by eating garlic*, properly of fighting cocks, like σκορδίζομαι."

[67] Taillardat, *Aristophanis Acharnae*, 209-210. For his part Seager ("Comic Possibilities") omits mention of the passage completely.

[68] 526a (REΓ): φύσιγξ λέγεται τὸ ἐκτὸς λέπισμα τῶν σκορόδων, ἡ φυσίγγη ("The *physinx* is said to be the outside peel of garlic, the *physinge*"). Cf. J. Van Leeuwen, *Aristophanis Equites* (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1900) on *Equites* 494: *vox* φύσιγξ *vesica etiam de alii tunica externa dicebatur* ("Concerning the exterior sheath of garlic, the word φύσιγξ was said to be the bladder").

juice from the cloves upon mood and behavior.[69] Following this logic, one modern commentator has proposed that the active form of the verb, φυσιγγοῦν, should mean "to become a φύσιγξ," that is, the bulb cluster itself; another suggests that, by metaphor, the φύσιγξ represents the foreskin.[70] Unfortunately, in the absence of a better explanation by either ancient or modern commentators (who seem not to understand completely what the φύσιγξ really is) this information has been deemed adequate; and despite its inconclusiveness, further investigation has essentially stopped at this point.

Now as I have already shown, the exact meaning of πεφυσιγγωμένοι has been problematic. Yet despite the considerable confusion, the lexical difficulties to interpretation are not insurmountable. For example, the scholia offer several different synonyms and metaphorical interpretations for the verb, the general sense of which is indicated by its connection with terms having to do with inflation or swelling, especially in medical contexts; this semantic aspect of the verb has appeared as well in modern commentary.[71] Thus, if we interpret πεφυσιγγωμένοι as signifying a general sense of an inflated, that is, essentially hollow, swollenness, the word as Aristophanes applies it to the Megarians now more clearly suggests connotations of male physical arousal. Consequently, after reconsidering the meaning of φύσιγξ, I reject the suggestion of the scholiast that it is the enveloping sheath (τὸ ἐκτὸς λέπισμα) of the clove cluster; and with this in mind I propose to refine the other interpretations of the pertinent words until we can actually visualize more precisely what they suggest about male sexuality.

And so I now suggest another interpretation of the phrase πεφυσιγγωμένοι ὀδύναις, one that relies on the physical appearance of garlic's flowering structure (rather than that of the underground

[69] Garlic was considered particularly dangerous according to the *Hippocratic Corpus*. See Wesley D. Smith, "The Development of Classical Dietetic Theory," in *Hippocratica: Actes du Colloque hippocratique de Paris (4-9 septembre 1978)*, Colloques internationaux du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique 583 (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 1980), 443.

[70] Csapo ("Ambivalence [II-IV], 119) cites Alan Sommerstein (in a personal communication) for the unattested verb form. For his part Csapo is extremely tentative about the metaphorical identification when he suggests that it "would seem to imply 'foreskin.'"

[71] 526a (REΓ). Inflation: ἀπὸ μεταφορᾶς τῶν τὸν ἄνεμον δεχομένων ἀσχῶν ἢ φυσῶν ("from the metaphor of bags holding air or bladders"); swelling: οἰδοῦντες. Cf. Pollux *Onomasticon* 4.198, explaining φύσιγξ as a blister or a bladder. Alan Sommerstein, *Acharnians* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1980): "blistered, inflamed." Cf. φυσᾶν ("to blow, to inflate, to swell"). Csapo ("Ambivalence [II-IV], 119) suggests a pun on πεφυσαμένοι ("bloated") but fails to make the connection with the appearance of the φύσιγξ.

clove cluster) to associate it with male sexuality and one that identifies the growth habit of the plant specifically with the erect penis. While most ancient and modern commentators seem largely to have neglected the correct interpretations, not all ancient evidence completely overlooks them. For example, ancient encyclopedists have suggested that the φύσιγξ represents the upright stalk of the garlic plant, a point made in Galen's *Glossarium in Hippocratem*;[72] and almost a century ago Rogers recognized the error of the scholiast's explanation (that it means the bulb covering) when he too chose to interpret φύσιγξ as the stalk of the plant.[73] But it is my contention that by seeing the φύσιγξ solely as the developing and swelling *flower cluster* atop the stalk of the garlic plant we come much closer to the visual associations made by the ancients.

Support for my interpretation is found in Theophrastus where, in a discussion of propagation methods for the genus *Allium*, new plants are said to be borne "on the *physinx*" (ἐπὶ τῆς φύσιγγος).[74] That potential new plants should be found in this location is not as unusual as it might first appear, for several members of the genus *Allium* do in fact produce miniature bulbs, known as bulbils, among the cluster of individual blooms on the flower umbel which ultimately forms at the summit of a leafless and hollow stalk.[75] Furthermore, while the underground garlic bulb *does* divide into the familiar cloves as one means of reproduction, these are located *inside* its papery sheath rather than *upon* it as Theophrastus indicates by the preposition ἐπί. On this basis alone, then, I discount φύσιγξ solely as a designation

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[72] Galen, *Glossarium in Hippocratem*: τὸ καλούμενον ἐκκαύλημα καὶ μάλιστα τὸ κοῖλον ("that which is called a 'stalk put forth' and especially a hollow one").

[73] Benjamin B. Rogers, ed., *The Acharnians of Aristophanes* (London: George Bell, 1910), 80. Suidas suggests as much: φύσιγγες, τὰ ἐν ταῖς κνήμαις ἐκκαύματα ("*physinges:* the branches on the stem between two joints"). Κνῆμαι are the spaces between the nodes or joints on a plant's stem or on its branches; between them are situated slender branches, smooth and presumably round. I suggest that these rounded stems resemble garlic's round and twisting floral stalk as it sends out its elongated and swelling floral cluster.

[74] Theophrastus *HP* 7.4.12; φύσιγγος is Causabon's conjecture. See discussion in D. H. F. Link and I. G. Schneider, eds., *Theophrasti Eresii quae supersunt opera*, 5 vols. (Leipzig: Vogel, 1818), 3.578-579. An interesting sidelight to the main discussion is the commentators' contention that anyone familiar with natural science would know to what Theophrastus was referring: *quod verum esse, et in allio longe frequentius quam in cepa accidere, norunt rerum naturae periti* ("which those with experience in nature know to be true and that it occurs far more frequently in garlic than in the onion"). Times have changed.

[75] The modern horticultural description of the floral structure of garlic (*A. sativum*) is instructive. See Bailey, *Manual*, 247: "scape to 2 ft. high, terete, exceeding lvs.... spathe with point 3-4 in. long; umbels small and dense, with long scarious bracts; fls. *often displaced by bulbels*, usually sterile, pinkish, about 1/6 in. long." (emphasis mine). See Plate 1.

for the sheath around the clove cluster of garlic, and I thereby associate it in a general way with the hollow stalk of the plant and in particular with the swollen floral mass that surmounts it.

With such identification established, I now contend that the distinctive flowering method of the members of the genus *Allium*, particularly garlic and onions, also contributes to visual associations with the male organ.[76] Although garlic growth often begins soon after the individual cloves are planted for the next crop, any overwintering greenery appears only as a short and compressed mass of leaves just above the soil surface.[77] In spring, after the leaf growth is well under way, the flowering stalk of the garlic plant arises from a central stem, upon the lower portion of which grow the slender stalkless leaves.[78] At first thin and almost hidden among these leaves, the stalk elongates by the day, curling and twisting upwards as it grows.[79] At the terminus of the stalk itself, the flowering umbel forms, visible from the onset as a pale, slender, pointed, enveloping sheath, called the spathe. As the entire stalk proper lengthens, the flower cluster swells and enlarges with budding flowers and small bulbils that Theophrastus elsewhere calls "tears" (δάκρυα).[80] The taut and tenuous spathe eventually grows more spherical, revealing the contours of its interior. It finally splits open to reveal the burgeoning mass of lilylike flowers and δάκρυα that are actually immature plants.[81] I would suggest, moreover, that the appearance of the tightly drawn spathe just before it splits open is what merits the scholiast's description of it as τὸ ἐκτὸς λέπισμα and what has prompted it to be incor-

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[76] Cf. Link and Schneider, *Theophrasti opera*, 579: *Nam vocabulum* φύσιγξ *commune est generi* κρομμύου *et* σκορόδου ("For the word *physinx* is common to the genus of *krommyon* [onion] and of *skorodon* [garlic]").

[77] I believe that this overwintering growth is what is meant by the phrase *spissis alia fibris* ("garlic with dense sprouts") at *Moretum* 87. See Florence L. Douglas, *A Study of the Moretum* (M.A. Thesis, Syracuse University; Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1929), 54. The phrase is the source of confusion to commentators who do not understand that if the plant is dug during the cold months (as Simulus in the poem has done), the leaf growth is restricted to this short greenery. For another, and incorrect, view cf. E. J. Kenney, ed., *The Ploughman's Lunch:* Moretum, *A Poem Ascribed to Virgil* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1984), 42-43.

[78] Not all varieties of garlic flower, however. The so-called "softneck" varieties produce no floral structure at all.

[79] See Plate 2.

[80] *De causis plantarum* 1.4.6. It should be noted as well that the cultivated tiger lily (*Lilium tigrinum*) of the closely related lily family (*Liliaceae*) also produces reproductive bulbils along its stem. Cf. Theophrastus *HP* 2.2.1 (of lilies) and the use of the terms δάκρυα αἰγείρου of the sap of the poplar.

[81] Currently cultivated strains of garlic do not reproduce sexually, that is, by setting seed; it is rather the bulbils in the flowering cluster that are harvested and sown as "seed." But see now David Stern, "Fertile Garlic Found!" *The Garlic Press* (Summer 1992), 8.

rectly understood as the papery sheath of the underground clove cluster. Thus, for garlic and some of its relatives in the genus *Allium*[82] the word φύσιγξ represents this tumid floral mass, wrapped within its enclosing spathe and situated atop a slender and hollow stalk.

In the case of some garlic varieties, moreover, the floral mass does not open; and if the plant is left undisturbed, the entire stalk and the φύσιγξ itself eventually dry out leaving a papery sheath enveloping the bulbils at the summit. Furthermore, each of the individual bulbils produced in the flowering head eventually sends out its own tiny green sprout, preparing for eventual growth after dropping to the soil below, and this often protrudes through the thin and tattered surrounding enclosure, the old φύσιγξ. Importantly, the slender, cylindrical stalk growing from each bulbil closely resembles the erect male organ; and were these bulbils to be gathered and stored in order to start a new crop of garlic, the new growth would be noticed readily, thereby further reaffirming the popular associations of the plant with male sexuality.[83]

From the identification of the φύσιγξ with the floral structure of the genus arise the sexual associations of πεφυσιγγωμένοι. To the ancient mind this visual imagery was concrete and clear, and it would suggest the enlargement of the penis as sexual arousal proceeded. Furthermore, the opening of the enveloping spathe and the subsequent emergence of the floral cluster from within would be identified with a similar emergence of the *glans penis* from its surrounding prepuce as a prelude to sexual activity. That such vegetative imagery was established as sexually suggestive has been shown above in a general way with the earlier discussion of the grapevine and the fig and in particular by the verbs ἀποθριάζω, ἀποψωλέω and its connotative equivalent σκορδίζω. Moreover, although it is roughly similar in all species of *Allium*, in the case of garlic this floral structure is particularly striking since the spathe that forms about the cluster is elongated, slender, and tapering to a distinctive point. The visual association with an erect and uncircumsized phallus is a marked one as can be seen in painted representations of the ever-aroused satyrs.[84]

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[82] *Allium cepa*, the cultivated onion, and *A. vineale*, the so-called "onion grass" of lawns and roadsides, for example.

[83] See Plate 3. The bulbils themselves are viable for long periods of time. Those remaining on floral structures gathered in July and brought indoors will send out new green sprouts throughout the winter and on into the following spring. These tightly compressed and cylindrical shoots often protrude through what is left of the dry and papery spathe.

[84] See Plate 4. The hydria (Musée des Antiquités de Rouen, inv. 538.3) is by the Kleophrades Painter, on which see J. D. Beazley, *Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters*, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) 1.188, no. 68. For further interpretive

As a result of all the above considerations, I propose that φυσιγγοῦσθαι ought best rendered as "to be (sexually) swollen," resonances of which appear in other sexually charged literature.[85]

In Aristophanes' depiction, then, the Megarian youths are not merely angered or spiteful in their retaliatory abduction of the Athenian women. Quite the contrary, they are sexually aroused as befits the activity in which they are involved. Furthermore, in light of the the sexually oriented context of the passage, the agonies (ὀδύναις) besetting them actually result from the ravages of sexual excitement rather than from any civic or social indignation. This interpretation becomes evident when we realize that the word ὀδύνη is most often associated with bodily pain and that it displays a range of meaning within that category. Of the many descriptive qualifiers applied to the word, the adjective σφυγμώδης ("pulse-like") indicates a throbbing or pulsing pain associated with the operation of arteries or with sensations typical of inflammation.[86] Given the visual connection of the male organ with the verbal evocation of swollenness depicted in the passage, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the "discomforts" associated with the eager youths are those of the distended phallus. Thus the phrase πεφυσιγγωμένοι ὀδύναις, far from depicting Megarian youths activated by merely altruistic and retaliatory motives, better represents their state of uncomfortable sexual arousal, reminiscent of similar physical conditions recorded both in medical writings and in contemporary drama.[87]

This close association of plant structure and human sexuality is not limited to only the fictive literary artifact, however; an examination of other texts, scientific and medical, that investigate garlic

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information on the depiction, see Robin Osborne, "Desiring Women on Athenian Pottery," in Kampen, *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, 75-76 and François Lissarrague, "The Sexual Life of Satyrs," in Halperin, Winkler, Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 63.

[85] E.g., in Strato's depiction of a young boy's penis (*AP.* 12.3.3-4): τὴν ἔτι μὲν γὰρ ἄθικτον ἀκμὴν λάλου ὀνόμαζε/ κωκὼ τὴν φυσᾶν ἄρτι καταρχομένην ("For call [it] when it is yet untouched *lalou*, and when just now starting to inflate, *koko*"). Another more specific association of *Allium* floral structure and the male organ also appears in a poem from the Balkans about sexual violation where the aggressor's penis is called in Turkish *sik sogan basli*, "an onion-headed prick," on which see Boris Sukitch Razvratnikov [pseudonym], "On Christian-Moslem Relations in the Balkans," *Maledicta* 1.1 (1977), 68. Razvratnikov contends that the reference to the onion is here applied to a circumcised penis; in light of the discussion above, I would suggest that that is not necessarily so.

[86] See *TLG* s.v. Cf. Aristotle *De spiritu* 4,483a11.

[87] Hippocrates *Int.* 17: a patient's sexual excess causes disease in the kidneys, the pains of which are called ὀδύναι. Cf. Sophocles *Trachiniae* 985-986 where Heracles, here in an essentially feminine characterization, is described as πεπονημένος ὀδύναις ("having been labored by pangs"). For a fuller discussion of both the feminine and sexual aspects of the word see Loraux, *Experiences of Tiresias*, 262-263 nn. 154-156.

(*Allium sativum*) and its close relative the onion (*Allium cepa*) brings to light an important facet of the ancient perception of these plants and their effect on male sexual performance. What I intend to show now is how this association originates in the concept of inflation. Furthermore, I will also show how garlic, onions, and similar plants included under the general category of "bulbs" were regarded as remedies for male sexual dysfunction because of their unique growth characteristics and how erection was visually associated with both the foliar and floral structure of the genus *Allium*. A convenient starting point comprises the various explanations, of the word πεφυσιγγωμένοι afforded by the scholia and discussed above. In two of these explanations, the imagery of objects inflated with air predominates, and the scholia specifically mention skin sacs or bladders in metaphorical terms.[88] The similarity clearly originates in the visual appearance of the tenuous spathe that envelopes the swelling flower cluster of the garlic plant and the hollowness of its flowering stalk as has been described above. Yet inflation plays an important role in literary descriptions of another member of the genus, the onion, whose association with sexuality is even more clearly attested.

Theophrastus, for example, makes it a point to mention that the leaves of certain onions are hollow (*HP* 1.10.8):

> ἴδιον δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν λαχανωδῶν, οἷον κρομύου γητείου, τὸ κοιλόφυλλον.
>
> And it is a peculiarity of potherbs like the onion and the long onion to have hollow leaves.

That the cylindrical and erect leaves of the familiar cultivated onion appear to be inflated, an inspection of the growth habit of the living plant will quickly bear out. The leaves of the plant are basally arranged, emerging from the top of the underground bulb, and they appear thickest below the middle, tapering upward to a point. On warm days, after the air trapped internally swells the waxy foliage to the point of obvious turgidity, the individual leaves can be squeezed manually to the point of bursting. The flowering stalk of the onion is similarly hollow, a fact that even modern taxonomical terminology describes as "inflated."[89] As this floral structure emerges in late spring from the base of the uppermost leaf, it is initially small but with shape and proportions that clearly suggest an uncircumcised

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[88] 526a (REΓ) has been cited above (nn. 68 and 71). Cf. also 526b (Lh): ἐξωγκωμένοι ἐκ μεταφορᾶς τῶν ἀσκῶν ("[puffed out], from the metaphor of bladders").

[89] The inflated stalk (scape) is a distinguishing feature of several species of *Allium*, including the onion (*A. cepa*). See Bailey, *Manual*, 245 and Plate 5.

penis. Its resemblance to the phallus, furthermore, becomes most visible just as the flower cluster begins to form; in its enveloping spathe and long tapering tip, it resembles the floral structure of garlic and other members of the genus.[90]

This visual identification is not the only manner in which these plants are associated with male sexuality, however; to the proponents of at least one ancient theory of erectile mechanism, the inflated appearance of the growing and flowering plants actually mirrored the physical changes of male sexual arousal. For example, there is considerable indication that the introduction of internally generated air (πνεῦμα) into the penis was considered by the ancients to be a major factor in gaining and maintaining an erection, and explanations of the physical aspects appear with considerable frequency in a wide range of medical and scientific writings. Aristotle, for example, discusses differences in the male organs of various animals and describes the penis and its enlargement. His terminology is reminiscent of those concepts associated with the inflated appearance of the foliar and floral structures of the plants discussed above (*HA* 2.1.500b):

> Τῶν δ' αἰδοίων διαφορὰ πολλή ἐστιν. τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἔχει χονδρῶδες τὸ αἰδοῖον καὶ σαρκῶδες, ὥσπερ ἄνθρωπος· τὸ μὲν οὖν σαρκῶδες οὐκ ἐμφυσᾶται, τὸ δὲ χονδρῶδες ἔχει αὔξησιν.
>
> There is a good deal of difference in animals' genitalia. For some have an organ that is composed of gristle and flesh like man; so while the fleshy portion is not swollenly inflated, the gristly part partakes of the enlargement.

In this passage the critical word is ἐμφυσᾶται, which here stands as evidence of a popular perception that a forced introduction of air results in an erection.[91] As a corollary to this concept, we may also cite Aristotle's discussion of the physiology of the octopus in which he explains that an external hardness of flesh can result from internal inflation (*HA* 4.1.524a):

> τὴν δὲ κεφάλην, ἕως ἂν ζῇ, σκληρὰν ἔχει ‹καὶ› κάθαπερ ἐμφυσημένην.
>
> As long as it is alive, it has a head that is hard just as though inflated.

The conceptual associations of πνεῦμα became even more refined when philosophical considerations added a speculative dimension to anatomical explanations for erectile activity. According to the Ps.-Aristotelean *Problemata* it was πνεῦμα, that vaguely physical yet intan-

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[90] Illustration and discussion in Nicholson, *Food Plants,* 166-167.
[91] LSJ s.v. ἐμφυσάω III: "to blow up, inflate."

gible and ill-defined internal substance of the body, to which was attributed the power of causing an erection (*Pr.* 30.1 954a):

> ὅ τε γὰρ ἀφροδισιασμὸς πνευματώδης. σημεῖον δὲ τὸ αἰδοῖον, ὡς ἐκ μικροῦ ταχεῖαν ποιεῖται τὴν αὔξησιν διὰ τὸ ἐμφυσᾶσθαι.
>
> For sexual activity is prompted by πνεῦμα. The penis gives evidence of this, since from a small size it makes a quick increase through being inflated.[92]

Early scientific speculation attributed to πνεῦμα those dynamic essences of life which were innate in both plant and animal worlds,[93] and because of its relationship to ψυχή ("breath-soul") in Greek philosophical and scientific thought, there was thought to be a close connection between the human generative function and πνεῦμα.[94] While centuries of learned controversy gave the term a wide range of philosophical interpretations, the idea of πνεῦμα as possessing a vital life force persisted in some form or another throughout ancient times.[95] For the purposes of this investigation, however, the early Ionian view described by Allbutt is perhaps the most basic and the most appropriate:

> In the mobile air, or in the evaporations of water, or in the exhalations of the juices of plants or animals as seen, for instance, arising from the stream of fresh blood in the sacrifices, was recognized a primordial essence, substance, or dynamic stuff, the source of energy and life, from which by differentiations all things came into being, and by a reverse process were dissolved.[96]

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[92] See also Galen *De usu part. corp. hum.* 15.2-3. Additional citations and discussion in Hopfner, *Das Sexualleben,* 76-78.

[93] Cf. the Hippocratic *Flat.* 3: πνεῦμα δὲ τὸ μὲν ἐν τοῖσι σώμασι φῦσα καλεῖται ("πνεῦμα [is] that [which] in bodies is called flatulence").

[94] See Onians, *Origins,* 93-122, especially 119-121 and also Davies and Kathirithamby, *Greek Insects,* 104-105 with figs. 23 and 24, where semen is linked to the ψυχή in the form of a butterfly.

[95] There seem to have been two theoretical branches of ancient thought about πνεῦμα: the medico-philosophical and the paraphilosophical, the former rooted more firmly in material factors, the latter more influenced by exotic ideas. See G. Verbeke, *L'Évolution de la Doctrine du Pneuma du Stoicisme à S. Augustin* (Louvain: Éditions de l'Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1945), 7-8.

[96] Allbutt, *Greek Medicine,* 230; in general see also Chaps. 10 and 11. Allbutt (Ibid., 234-35), however, also points out that there should be recognized the difference between the more or less abstract conceptions of πνεῦμα and those of a concrete nature, linked more physically to the body but also partaking of properties less easily discerned. The changing role of πνεῦμα is outlined in John Scarborough's article "Medicine," in *Civilization of the Ancient Mediterranean,* 3 vols., ed. Michael Grant and Rachel Kitzinger (New York: Scribner's, 1988), 2.1234-1235, 1239-1240. See also S. Sambursky, *The Physical World of the Greeks,* trans. Merton Dagut (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), 132-143.

This concept of πνεῦμα φυσικόν, πνεῦμα as a physical entity, was closely identified with the primal vegetative essence of life, and there is evidence as well that this substance was associated with various internal excretions and equated with human sperm.[97] Of significance too is that πνεῦμα itself was closely associated with various kinds of internal heat thought by some to be produced during digestion.[98]

Digestion itself had a role in sexuality. In terms of actual sexual activity, in fact, the disruption of the digestive system resulting from ingesting flatulent food was highly regarded as contributory to the sexual stimulation of the male.[99] For example, Athenaeus reports that since certain seafoods were considered difficult to digest, as a consequence they were believed to heighten sexual desire:

> τὸ δέ τῶν μαλακίων γένος, οἷον πολυπόδων τε καὶ σηπιῶν καὶ τῶν τοιούτων, τὴν μὲν σάρκα δύσπεπτον ἔχει· διὸ καὶ πρὸς ἀφροδισιαμοὺς ἁρμόττουσιν.
>
> The group of mollusks, like the octopus, the squid, and similar creatures have flesh that is hard to digest. On this account they are suited for sexual stimulation.[100]

In the general category of mollusks the octopus (πολύπους / πῶλυψ) is especially renowned for its stimulative properties, this association

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[97] Winkler (*Constraints of Desire*, 68) recounts its role in the expulsion of excretions. πνεῦμα φυσικόν is the *spiritus naturalis*. Other kinds are designated πνεῦμα ζωτικόν (*spiritus vitalis*) and πνεῦμα ψυχικόν (*spiritus animalis*). See Arthur John Brock, ed. and trans., *Galen: On the Natural Faculties*, Loeb Classical Library (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1916), xxxiv-xxxv and Hippocrates *Acut.* 1.6; 29.2 (= *CMG* 1.2.4 [Joly] 128f. 146) and also R. Joly, *Recherches sur le traité pseudo-hippocratique "Du Régime"* (Paris: Société d' Édition "Les Belles Lettres,"1960), 30. The role of πνεῦμα and its association with sperm is discussed in Aristotle *De generatione animalium* 735b10-736a15, on which see now Giulia Sissa, "Subtle Bodies," in Feher, Naddaf, and Tazi, *Fragments* (New York: Zone, 1989), 3.38-39. An extended treatment of σύμφυτον πνεῦμα (LSJ: "vital spirit") appears in A. L. Peck, ed. and trans., *Aristotle: Generation of Animals* Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943), 576-593. Cf. Hippocrates *Genit.* and Galen *De semine.*

[98] Erisistratus's view is given by Galen *De nat. fac.* 2.8: εἰς τὴν πέψιν ὑπέθετο πλεῖστον δύνασθαι τὸ διὰ τῶν ἀρτηριῶν εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν ἐμπῖπτον πνεῦμα ("He supposed that for the digestive process pneuma was especially powerful as it burst through the arteries into the abdomen"). Summary of two views in Allbutt, *Greek Medicine*, 239; see also 136, on Diocles.

[99] According to Onians (*Origins*, 112 n. 2), the bean (κύαμος) in particular was so associated "because it was believed that διεγείρει τὰ σώματα πρὸς συνουσίαν ἐσθιόμενος ['Eaten it arouses bodies for intercourse'] (Joan. Lyd. *de Mens.* IV, 42) and account of its flatulence (see Porph. *in Hor. Serm.* II, 6, 63)." Other individual foods were noted for properties beneficial to the body in particular ways. For example, according to Aristotle (*HA* 8.21.6, 8/7.21.603b) one kind of food puts wind in; another makes flesh, another fattens: καὶ ἅμα φασὶ τὸ μὲν [τῆς τροφῆς] ἐμφυσᾶν, τὸ δὲ σαρκοῦν τὸ δὲ πιαίνειν. The number and variety of flatulent foods in general was large. For an extensive list of such foods, including raw bulbs (βολβοὶ οἱ ὠμότεροι), see Oribasius *Coll. med.* 3.23.

[100] Athenaeus 8.357, paraphrasing Mnesitheus.

presumably deriving from its habit of "inflating" itself with sea water. This characteristic is reflected in a fragment of Old Comedy where the octopus is combined with other stimulating foods in a diet designed to promote male sexual performance:

> ἐρῶντι δέ, Κτήσων, τί μᾶλλον συμφέρει ὧν νῦν φέρων πάρειμι;
> κήρυκας, κτένεας, βολβοὺς μέγαν τε πολύπουν ἰχθῦς θ' ἁδρούς.
>
> What better suits a man looking for sex, Kteson, than these things which I have come with: trumpet shells, comb shells, onions, a large octopus and well grown fish?[101]

What is noteworthy about this list of stimulating foods is the inclusion of bulbs among the foods deemed effective. Like the octopus, one such bulb, the onion, promotes the internal "gassiness" associated with this gastric disruption as both Dioscorides and Galen attest; in fact, the former asserts clearly that it promotes desire.[102] This eating of bulbs to stimulate male sexual desire, however, had already surfaced much earlier in the literary record with the playwright Diphilus:

> οἱ βολβοὶ δύσπεπτοι μέν εἰσι, πολύτροφοι δὲ καὶ εὐστόμαχοι, ἔτι δὲ σμηκτικοὶ καὶ ἀμβλυντικοὶ ὄψεως, διεγερτικοὶ δ' ἀφροδισίων.
>
> Bulbs are hard to digest, but they are very nutritious and wholesome and easy on the stomach. And yet they are purgative, disruptive of the vision, and are a great stimulation to sex.[103]

This popular attitude toward the eating of bulbs as a dietary spur to sexual performance is even more graphically depicted elsewhere in Athenaeus:

> βολβοὺς μὲν σποδιᾷ δαμάσας καταχύματι
> δεύσας ὡς πλείστους διάτρωγε· τὸ γὰρ δέμας
> ἀνέρος ὀρθοῖ.
>
> Tame the bulbs with ashes, douse with sauce,
> And eat as much as you can:
> 'Cause then a man's meat stands up.[104]

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[101] From the *Pamphila* of Alexis quoted in Athenaeus 8.356f (=Kock 2.360). Cf. Athenaeus 356e: ὁ δὲ πώλυψ συνεργεῖ μὲν ἀφροδισίοις, σκληρὸς δ' ἐστὶ καὶ δύσπεπτος ("The octopus is helpful for lovemaking, and it is bitter and hard to digest"). Cf. Csapo, "Ambivalence (II-IV), 119 n. 44.

[102] Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 2.151: πνευματωτικά, ὀρέξεως ἐκκλητικά. Cf. Galen *De alim. facultat.* 2.66.

[103] Athenaeus 2.64a.

[104] Athenaeus 1.5c quoting the playwright Plato (= Kock 1.646). Note, however, the proverb cited by Athenaeus (2.64b): οὐδέν σ' ὀνήσει βολβός, ἂν μὴ νεῦρ' ἔχῃς ("A bulb will help you not at all when you've got no penis"). For νεῦρον as the penis, see Henderson, *Maculate Muse,* 116 with further references there and Csapo, "Ambivalence (II-IV), 117 with n. 139, linking sexuality to a sense of aggression with the pun.

Because of its close relationship with male sexual potency resulting from a belief in an established network of dietary benefits, it is easy to see how the general growth habit of bulbs, especially that of the familiar onion and garlic, serves to act as an external expression of the plant's perceived function as a male stimulant when taken internally. To the ancient mind the swollen nature of the upright stalk corresponds visually to internal activity deemed beneficial to male sexual arousal.

In particular, garlic itself is also well-known for its ability to produce internal gas, and this was a major factor in its association with male sexuality. We may take notice of Aristotle's description of garlic's effects on the urinary tract and on the genitalia in which he stresses the flatulent nature of the plant (*Pr.* 13.6 908b):

> ἀλλ' ὅτι μόνον φυσητικὸν τῆς κάτω κοιλίας τῶν οσμὴν ἐχόντων ἰσχυρὰν ἅμα καὶ οὐρητικήν, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα ἄνω ποῖει, οἷον ἡ ῥάφανος, καὶ τὰ πνεύματα.
>
> Yet of all the things that have a powerful odor, (garlic) alone is responsible for gassiness in the intestines, for those others like the radish produce gas in the upper regions.[105]

He then goes on to report that pressure caused by flatulence is instrumental in causing sexual excitement where there is already an inclination to gassiness (13.6 908b):

> ὁ δὲ τόπος ὁ πέριξ τὰ αἰδοῖα καὶ τὴν κύστιν τῶν τοιούτων ἀπολαύει διὰ τὴν γειτνίασιν, καὶ ὅτι πνευματικός ἐστιν·
>
> The area around the genitals and the bladder partakes of such activity because of their proximity to one another and since it is full of pneuma.

Thus the association of the garlic plant with the penis was, like the onion and other bulbs, based both on visual factors and on factors more closely linked to dietary considerations. On these two bases alone, therefore, could rest the repute of certain bulbous plants as remedies for male sexual function. Yet there exists another more complex relationship that further associates the garlic plant in particular with the phallus through a network of associations drawn from the animal world. In the next chapter I investigate how the appearance and behavior of these animals prompt an identification with the penis and how this leads to a belief in these creatures' inherent sexuality and in its effects on male sexual dysfunction. It will become apparent, moreover, that there exists a network of imagery and anal-

[105] Aristotle is explaining the persistence of the garlic odor in urine.

ogy linking male sexuality with the animal world in a way similar to the one that associates it with particular plants.

CHAPTER FOUR

SERPENTS, SEXUALITY, AND THE POWER OF STONES

As we have already seen, the close association made by the ancients between certain plants and human sexuality depended upon their growth habits, their structure, and those perceived innate properties that prompted a belief in them as sexual stimulants and particularly as remedies for male erectile dysfunction. In this chapter I first explore how these characteristics of the plant world figured in ancient perceptions of the animal world in general, and I show how closely related were the correspondences thought to exist between them. Next I focus on the human perception of and reaction to amphibians and reptiles by highlighting the conceptual relationship between male sexuality and salamanders, lizards, and especially snakes. In addition, I also examine how the serpentine characteristics shared by certain members of the plant kingdom play a significant role in their identification by the ancients with both snakes and the penis, a fact that is essential to an understanding of their perceived efficacy as male sexual stimulants. In the remainder of the chapter, I analyze the ways that those same efficacious properties thought to reside in both plants and serpents were understood to exist in a variety of minerals and stones. According to this belief, the medical and magical elements of the interrelationship, grounded as they were in the idea of sympathetic mutuality, could be abstracted from their original sources and established in objects linked by suggestion alone to the original source of their efficacy. Once resident in an object fashioned by human agency, then, these powers could be more easily controlled and manipulated for particular ends.

The perceived innate properties of plants, their physical characteristics, and substances derived from them were seen by the ancients to have close correspondences in the animal world. For example, just as rapid vegetative growth formed the basis for an association with the concept of ὕβρις and its connotations in the realm of sexuality, the concept of overreaching growth was extended to the human and animal sphere, paralleling in some ways the efforts of the grapevine to burst free of the restraints imposed by humans. In popular perceptions of the animal world, the concept of ὕβρις was joined with that of the excessive sexuality of certain beasts,

particularly the donkey. Pindar relates that the sight of the erect penises of donkeys to be sacrificed to Apollo by the Hyperboreans prompts an amused reaction by the god (*Pyth.* 10.36):

τε μάλιστ' Ἀπόλλων
χαίρει, γελᾷ θ' ὁρῶν ὕβριν ὀρθίαν κνωδάλων.

Apollo especially rejoices, and he laughs,
Seeing the erect brazenness of the attendant beasts.

It is the combination of ὕβρις, which in the case of animals is often the result of overfeeding to the point of satiety (κόρος), with the obviously erect state of the animals themselves which emphasizes the poet's attitude toward the excessive indecency of the beasts' condition.[1] This type of description is similar to and reminiscent of the negative perception of the rampant and aggressive growth of the overnourished grapevine described by Aristotle and Theophrastus.[2]

Much like the examples taken from the plant world where plant structures resembling human sex organs were thought to influence their performance, moreover, sexual associations drawn from animals were based on the same kind of perception: that the genitalia of some animal species were able to promote sexual activity in humans when ingested either individually or in combination with other substances, especially wine. The list of these stimulants is long and includes the testes and penis of many kinds of animals, including the rooster, bull, ram, buck, and stag among others.[3] The sexually stimulative ability of applied or ingested remedies and of amulets derived from those same animal sources depends, like λιγγούριον discussed earlier, either upon the bodily composition of the animals themselves

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[1] The suggestion of humor in the poet's depiction cannot be ruled out, however. See Lissarrague, "Sexual Life of Satyrs," 55; for the possibility of humor, N. R. E. Fisher, "*Hybris* and Dishonour," *GR* 23 (1976), 190. For the connection between hybristic animal behavior and satiety in feeding, cf. Plutarch *Quaest. Rom.* 280: ἢ διὰ κόρον καὶ πλησμονὴν ἐξυβρίζουσι καὶ βόες καὶ ἵπποι καὶ ὄνοι καὶ ἄνθρωποι ("Is it not because of satiety and surfeit that oxen and horses and asses and humans run to excess?"). At Aristophanes' *Vespae* 1303-10 Philocleon's outrageous behavior is compared to that of a well-fed donkey. Further discussion of the relationship between animals and ὕβρις in D. MacDowell, "*Hybris* in Athens," *GR* 23 (1976), 15-16.

[2] Aristotle *GA* 725b.34.-35; Theophrastus *CP* 5.9.10-13, *HP* 4.14.6. See Chapter Three, 101-103.

[3] The testes of the fox were especially effective, as was the tip of the animal's penis worn as an amulet. See *Kyranides* 2.2.13-14: τὸ δὲ ἄκρον αὐτοῦ περιαφθὲν μεγίστην ἔντασιν ποιεῖ ("Its tip when carried on the body produces a very large erection"). The genitals of the rhinoceros were stimulative to both sexes (*Kyranides* 2.34.6-7): οἱ δ' ὄρχεις αὐτοῦ ἢ τὸ αἰδοῖον ποτιζόμενα ἀνδράσι καὶ γυναιξὶ συνουσίαν παρορμᾷ ἀκρότατα ("Its testicles or its genitalia when taken in liquid prompts intercourse to the highest degree for men and women"). There is a full listing of such stimulative animal parts in Hopfner, *Das Sexualleben*, 276-277; Winkler (*Constraints of Desire*, 81) explains the use of several others.

or upon substances secreted by them. In keeping with the belief in sympathetic influences, moreover, the powers of such substances could be transferred even to inanimate objects. For example, the ashes of the penises of certain mammals like the bull, the stag, and the buck were thought to retain the essential characteristics of their original source and to promote sexual activity when mixed with wine and applied to a man's genitals.[4] On the other hand, bile (χολή) taken from specific animals was one of the best known of the many secretions reputed to rejuvenate male sexual prowess. Pliny reports that the bile of a boar spread on the human penis acts as an aphrodisiac, and he credits other substances with such power as well.[5] Most notable among these latter was the famous *hippomanes*, the substance secreted by mares in heat which figures prominently in both literary and scientific texts as the cause of a rampant, manic sexuality.[6]

Birds, too, are linked to sexuality by similar perceptions and the host of beliefs that originate with them. They were, furthermore, considered exceptionally potent and prone to sexual excess, as a glance at Hopfner's collection of citations will attest.[7] Thus avian genitalia, eggs, and excrement were often the means by which the human sexual drive was revived; even the flesh of certain birds promoted sexual impulses when eaten.[8] Of these the most famous was the rooster, whose connection with sexuality and aggression figured so prominently in the last chapter. Both its genitalia and its rump (τὸ ὀρθοπύγιον) were highly regarded as erection-causing substances.[9] Considered also particularly effective were its gizzard stones (*alectoria*

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[4] *Geoponica* 17.5.3-4; 19.5.4.

[5] *NH* 28.80.261: *Coitus stimulat fel aprunum inlitum.* Pig marrow (*medullae suum haustae*) and ass tallow mixed with goosegrease (*sebum anseris masculi adipe admixto inlitum*) are considered stimulative as well. Others include *castoreum* from the testes of the beaver, widely reputed to be efficacious for the overall improvement of health and for remedial treatments; and the *virus amatorium* (Pliny *NH* 8.34.83) found in a tuft of hair from the tail of the wolf.

[6] E.g., Vergil *Geo.* 3.280-282, Tibullus 2.4.58; Propertius 4.5.18; Juvenal 2.6.133-135. Cf. Aristotle *HA* 6.18. The term *hippomanes* is also applied to a fleshy growth on the body of a foal at birth (Aelian, *De natura animalium* 3.17, with a fuller account appearing at 14.18) which prompted an erotic madness when it was ingested. A slightly different association was made in Olympia where, Pausanias reports (5.27.3), a bronze statue of a mare, called by the Eleans *hippomanes*, drove stallions into sexual frenzy as they attempted to mount it.

[7] Hopfner, *Sexualleben*, 279.

[8] Sparrows, doves, and especially partridges appear as sources for substances that cause sexual stimulation. Apparently thrushes (κίχλαι) were considered food for the bridegroom (Antidotos in Athenaeus 14.642d [= Kock 2.357]).

[9] *Kyranides* 3.3.4-5: Ἐὰν δὲ τοὺς ὄρχεις καὶ τὸ ὀρθοπύγιον συνεχῶς τις ἐσθίει, ἔντασιν καὶ πρὸς συνουσίαν τὴν ὁρμὴν ἐγείρει ("When someone eats the testicles and the rump on a regular basis, it rouses an erection and a desire for intercourse").

gemma, lapis alectorius). Their repute was based on the belief that while these stones were invigorating to the body in general, they were especially effective in increasing both male sexual prowess and feminine allure.[10]

Visual factors, moreover, contributed to sexual associations made with birds. The behavior of one in particular, the ἴυγξ (*Iunx torquilla*), a type of woodpecker, is exemplary of the way in which habitual movements by an animal were interpreted and how erotic associations applicable to the human sphere were drawn from them.[11] It is not hard to imagine how the rhythmic sinuosity of the bird's movement prompted sexual associations in general and phallic associations in particular.[12] These associations derive from the sinuous movements of its neck, all the more remarkable since the bird can turn its head completely around; and both the erotic and the cultic were invoked in the impressions generated by the bird's activities, for they have been compared to the lewd oscillations of the adepts of the Magna Mater.[13] This erotic connection, moreover, led to the use of the bird in love magic, and its appearance in the magical *Kyranides* is instructive: there it is called κιναίδιος πτηνόν ("the promiscuous bird").[14] Accounts of this association also surface elsewhere in both literary and magical works.[15] For example, the famous account in

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[10] The belief was a common one. For example, the effectiveness of the stone for the athlete Milo is found in Pliny (*NH* 37.54.144) and also in the lapidary of Damigeron-Evax (29.9-10), where the sexual aspect is also made clear: *Praeterea circa uenereas uoluptates reddit uigentes et ualidos et robustos. Sed etiam mulieribus proderit portantibus quae uolunt uiris placere* ("Especially in matters of sexual desires it renders [men] vigorous, strong, and robust. But it will even be of help to women carrying it who wish to please men"). See also Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes*, 39: "As do later medieval writers, Marbode states that alectorius is found in three year old, castrated cocks or in normal, but very old, cocks. Doubtless the 'stone' was a bit of gravel found in a fowl's gizzard, [and] Marbode's description points to quartz."

[11] Illustration in Herman Heinzel, Richard Fitter, and John Parslow, *The Birds of Britain and Europe*, 4th. ed. rev. (London: Collins and Sons, 1984), 197.

[12] D'Arcy Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (London: Oxford University Press, 1947), 124-125 cites Dionysius Ὀρνιθιακά 1.35. The bird is also called the γλωττίς because of the prominence of its tongue, which Aristotle (*HA* 504a 1-19) and Pliny (*NH* 11.107.256) compare to that of serpents. See Filippo Capponi, *Ornithologia Latina* (Genova: Istituti di Filologia Classica e Medievale, 1979), 271-274. I have observed this feature in a number of common species of woodpecker at a window feeder.

[13] Fillipo Capponi, "Avifauna e Magia," *Latomus* 40 (1981), 301 who also cites ornithologists in showing that the turning of the neck is a response to danger: 296 n. 22.

[14] *Kyr.* 1.10.4 See lengthy discussion in Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 80 and further references there: e.g., A. S. F. Gow, "ΙΥΓΞ, ΡΟΜΒΟΣ, *rhombus, turbo*," *JHS* 54 (1934), 1-13; E. Tavenner, "Iunx and rhombus," *TAPA* 64 (1933), 109-127; and S. S. Ingallina, *Orazio e la magia* (Palermo: Palumbo, 1974), 158-165.

[15] E.g., the roughly simliar love charms mentioned in Theocritus *Idyll.* 2.17. and Horace *Epode* 17.7.

Pindar (*Pyth.* 4.213-219) depicts the *iunx* itself bound to a wheel and associated thematically with persuasive erotic magic. In such magical contexts subjecting the bird to whipping and burning produces bodily suffering which, when combined with the naturally promiscuous nature of the bird and transferred to the object of the erotic magic, is meant to inflict both physical and mental anguish upon the intended victim.[16]

But perhaps the most striking associations between animals and sexuality exist in the case of certain amphibians and reptiles (Classes *Amphibia* and *Reptilia*).[17] Of the former, evidence indicates that salamanders (Order *Caudata*), believed to be venomous and dangerous to other creatures, were ingested as an aphrodisiac but that this was done only after the animals were stripped of their extremities, with only the tail left intact, and then preserved.[18] Thus prepared, the salamander's chief visual characteristic is an elongated, attenuated cylindricality similar to those features that suggested the sexual associations of the floral structures of the plants discussed in Chapter Three. Lizards (Order *Lacertilia*) have an even closer connection to sexuality. This is evident in the use of the general word for lizard in Greek, σαύρα, in describing the penis in an advanced state of arousal, especially in the case of youths. In the erotic epigrams of Strato in the *Palatine Anthology*, for example, a boy's organ is often called a "lizard"; and in a couplet that plays on the language of measurement and Homeric diction, the poet describes the growth of a young boy's penis (*AP* 11.21):

> Πρῴην τὴν σαύραν Ἀγάθων ῥοδοδάκτυλον εἶχεν
> νῦν δ' αὐτὴν ἤδη καὶ ῥοδόπηχυν ἔχει.

> Just now Agathon had a rosy-fingered lizard;
> But now he's already got one that's rosy-armed.

[16] See Christopher A. Faraone, "The Wheel, the Whip and Other Implements of Torture: Erotic Magic in Pindar *Pythian* 4.213-19," *CJ* 89.1 (1993), 10 n. 33 and 13-16 for the specific relationship of the torture of the *iunx* to other magical activity. The wheel itself, likewise known as *iunx*, was also famous for its seductive power. Cf. now also a refutation to Faraone's piece in Sarah I. Johnston, "The Song of the *Iynx*," *TAPA* 125 (1995), 177-206 where it is the alluring sound associated with both the bird and the wheel which is said to constitute the effectiveness of the erotic magic.

[17] For the importance of the latter in magical texts, see Arthur Darby Nock, "The Lizard in Magic and Religion," in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 271-278.

[18] Pliny *NH* 29.23.76, citing Sextius Niger, a source of Dioscorides as well: *Sextius venerem accendi cibo earum, si detractis interaneis et pedibus et capite in melle serventur, tradit* ("Sextius reports that passion is inflamed by making them food, if they are saved in honey with their innards, legs, and head pulled off").

In another poem from the same collection, a young man's erection is similarly described and admired in mythological terms (*AP* 12.207):

Ἐχθὲς λουόμενος Διοκλῆς ἀνενήνοχε σαύραν
ἐκ τῆς ἐμβάσεως τὴν Ἀναδυομένην.
ταύτην εἴ τις ἔδειξεν Ἀλεξάνδρῳ τότε ἐν Ἴδῃ,
τὰς τρεῖς ἂν ταύτης προκατέκρινε θεάς.

Yesterday while washing, Diokles brought up
From his bath his lizard: "The Sea Emerger."
If someone had ever shown *this* to Paris on Ida,
He would have rejected three goddesses in favor of it.

Here the poet has depicted the penis of a young boy rising up out of the surface of the water and has likened it to the famous picture of Aphrodite by the painter Apelles.[19]

But the description of the penis as a σαύρα most illustrative for purposes of this investigation appears in another poem of Strato where the identification of the male organ with a lizard is combined with a description of its physical appearance in a markedly sexual context. The poem itself is a description of the masturbation of a young boy, and it describes to its addressee what will happen as he handles the boy's penis.[20] In it the poet also introduces the affectionate terminology given to the organ of a young boy and includes pet words for the penis at different stages of arousal (*AP* 12.3):

Τῶν παίδων, Διόδωρε, τὰ προσθέματ' εἰς τρία πίπτει
σχήματα, καὶ τούτων μάνθαν' ἐπωνυμίας.
τὴν ἔτι μὲν γὰρ ἄθικτον ἀκμὴν λάλου ὀνόμαζε,
κωκὼ τὴν φυσᾶν ἄρτι καταρχομένην·
τὴν δ' ἤδη πρὸς χεῖρα σαλευομένην, λέγε σαύραν·
τὴν δὲ τελειοτέρην, οἶδας ἃ χρή σε καλεῖν.

The appendages of youngsters, Diodore, fall into three forms,
And so learn the names for them.
Name the one untouched and in prime "Lalou,"
And "Koko" the one just starting to inflate;
Say "Lizard" for the one already rolling sidelong toward your hand
And the one more full grown, you know what you must call it.

The first two names for the penis, λάλου and κωκώ, appear only here in ancient literature and seem to be simply affectionate terms.[21] Yet they do in fact represent more concrete visual associations of the

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[19] Strabo 14.2.19.

[20] Maxwell-Stuart, "Strato and the Musa Puerilis," 223, 231; W. M. Clarke, "Phallic Vocabulary in Straton," *Mnemosyne* 47.4 (1994), 467.

[21] Cf. Richlin, *Garden of Priapus,* 36-37 and n. 12. That λαλεῖν ("to chatter") also has a wider meaning, however, appears in Maxwell-Stuart, "Strato and the Musa Puerilis," 223, where it is associated with the preliminaries to manual stroking in another of Strato's epigrams (*AP* 228).

penis as it grows in size: the former is understood as the "tip of the lambda" while the latter is derived from the plant world.[22]

The type of penis called the "lizard," however, suggests movement of an even more sexually explicit nature. In this poem the organ, almost completely aroused as it responds to the hand of an older lover, displays perceptible movement and an increased size much like the characteristics of muscles visible just beneath the surface of the skin.[23] Observations of the physical behavior of the lizard itself seems to have contributed to this association, for the word σαλεύω indicates a rolling or oscillating movement, often said of a ship, which is reminiscent of a lateral sinuousity when the reptile moves its body forward, especially as this is evidenced in the tail.[24] A form of the word also appears in a description of the shifting gait of another reptile, the tortoise.[25] Sexually explicit significance attaches to the word as well since it was also used to describe the sidelong rolling of the hips typical of prostitutes and effeminate males.[26] Other elements of sexual suggestion may be involved here as well: Aristotle compares the movements of the woodpecker (δρυοκολάπτης) in ascending trees to those of the spotted lizard or gecko (*Lacerta gecko*), perhaps resembling the erotically evocative habits of the *iunx* discussed above.[27]

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[22] Clarke, "Phallic Vocabulary," 468-469. Of the two possible etymologies for κωκώ, the most appropriate seems to derive from κόκκος, the gall of a type of oak. See Maxwell-Stuart, "Strato and the Musa Puerilis," 231 n. 1 and the remarks of Clarke, "Phallic Vocabulary," 469. Theophrastus (*HP* 3.16.1) reports that the κόκκος, a source of crimson dye, is another kind of fruit produced by the kermes oak (*Quercus coccifera*): φέρει δὲ παρὰ τὴν βάλανον καὶ κόκκον τινὰ φοινικοῦν. The association of the latter with a swollen vegetative protuberance is especially important since the penis called κωκώ is also described as inflating (φυσᾶν), an image reminiscent of the terminology associated with garlic and onions.

[23] It should be noted that according to Isidore (*Etymologiae* 11.1.117) the quick and jerky movements of the lizard (*lacerta*) were thought to be the origin of the Latin *lacertus* ("muscle"): *lacerti...appellantur...a nomine similium animalium sub terra delitescentium* ("Muscles are named from the name of similar animals hiding themselves away under the ground"). See also Skoda, *Médecine Ancienne*, 58 n. 211, citing J. Hyrtl, *Onomatologia anatomica. Geschichte und kritik der anatomischen Sprache der Gegenwart* (Wien: 1880), 335-337.

[24] In this I differ significantly from Clarke ("Phallic Vocabulary," 468), who sees the intransitive form of σαλεύω as describing an essentially up and down or bobbing movement as basically masturbatory. In addition, he suggests that such movement is reminiscent of a lizard moving "jerkily to / toward the hand." In doing so he calls attention to Praxiteles' statue of Apollo Sauroktonos with its depiction of the lizard climbing upward. I contend rather that the wriggling motion of the lizard ascending the tree trunk is the motion here meant.

[25] *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 28: σαῦλα ποσὶν βαίνουσα ("making its way waddling on its feet").

[26] Cf. Aristophanes *Vespae* 1173 (of Philokleon): καὶ μὲν προθουμοῦμαί γε σαυλοπρωκτιᾶν ("And I yearn to roll my behind about").

[27] Aristotle, *De mir. ausc.* 13. According to Hesychius (s.v.) the ἀσκαλαβώτης is also

As a result of these associations, the lizard's body itself was often seen to partake of the familiar balance of opposing magical influences, and it appears as an important component of the magic which prompted sexual desire and the physical changes of arousal. Conversely, it was also a component of the magic used to reduce sexual urges and to prevent sexual activity. The late writer Marcellus, for example, includes the gecko (*stelio*) in a list of stimulative remedies, advising that the bodies of the animals, soaked in vinegar and then combined with plants and substances noted for their aphrodisiac qualities, be applied as a salve to the big toe of the right foot to promote desire and to that of the left to stop the sexual drive.[28] Pliny reports (*NH* 30.49.141), with some scepticism, that the ashes of the gecko wrapped in a linen cloth and held in the left hand promotes sexual yearnings, while the opposite is true if held in the right.[29] Like the animals and birds cited above, moreover, specific organs of the lizard were also deemed especially effective when used in erotic magic. As might be expected, the penis of the animal was considered especially powerful; and, if seized while the reptile itself was copulating and then dried, it could be included in a potion to produce sexual desire in any woman who drank it.[30]

The tail of the lizard, moreover, was also closely associated with erotic magic, and carried as an amulet, it causes erections in men.[31] The physical appearance of the tail, that is, its attenuated elongation combined with its sinuous motions, contributed to the sexual association. The importance of this wriggling movement can be seen in the directions given by Marcellus for securing the faithfulness of a woman: with the tail of a living lizard, one might ensure that a desirable woman is not touched by a rival (*De medicamentis* 33.64):

> Mulierem, quam tu habueris, ut numquam alius inire possit, facies hoc: Lacertae viridis vivae sinistra manu caudam curtabis eamque vivam dimittes; caudam, donec immoriatur, eadem palma clausam tenebis et mulierem verendaque eius, dum cum ea cois, tange.

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called the γαλεώτης. This was the preferred species for magical purposes, but in such cases exact identification was not always necessary. See Nock, "Lizard in Magic," 276.

[28] *De medicamentis* 33.8. The list of plants and substances includes some of those most commonly considered sexually stimulative: e.g., *castoreum* (beaver bile), *euzomon* (Lat. *eruca*, the rocket), and *symphoniaca* (henbane).

[29] *Mirum et de stelionis cinere, si verum est, linamento involutum in sinistra manu venerem stimulare, si transferatur in dextram, inhibere...* Cf. Pliny's claim (*NH* 30.49.141) that if a man urinates on a lizard (*lacerta*) and the animal drowns, there is a resultant loss of sexual desire.

[30] See also Nock, "Lizard in Magic," 275-276.

[31] *Kyranides* 2.14.13: ἡ δὲ οὐρὰ φορουμένη ἔντασιν ποιεῖ.

> So that someone else cannot copulate with a woman whom you would have, you will do the following: you will cut the tail of a living green lizard with your left hand and you will let it go still alive; you will hold the tail closed in the palm of the same hand until it dies and touch the woman and her private parts while you have sex with her.

From this account we can determine that to the ancient mind the actual motion of the tail represented a very real sexual power, one that could be transferred to the penis (in this case to stop its ability to perform the sex act). This is the same kind of association echoed in Strato's "lizard" in the epigram discussed above.

Those very features common to birds, salamanders, and lizards which led to perceived associations with male sexuality because of their suggestive appearance and their sinuous movements are nowhere more prominent than in the case of snakes and serpents.[32] These reptiles, members of the suborder *Ophidia,* appear frequently throughout classical literature, and the ancients were able to distinguish numerous varieties among them. Like other animals, the noticeable visual characteristics and behavior of the different kinds of serpents contributed to their symbolic associations with various spheres of human activity.[33] The names of many of these types of snakes, moreover, indicate some distinguishable characteristic of the animal, and in some sense they may be identified according to the modern distinctions in the Linnaean system of classification.[34] For purposes of this investigation, however, such specific identifications are important only as far as they reflect commonly held ancient perceptions about the reptiles' association with sexuality and with male sexual dysfunction in particular.

Serpents in general have long been closely connected with both magic and sexuality in diverse cultures widely separated by time and

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[32] In this discussion I use the term "snake" for the reptile when the context suggests harmlessness and "serpent" when the emphasis is more on the threatening or destructive character of the animal. Cf. Balaji Mundkur, *The Cult of the Serpent: An Interdisciplinary Survey of Its Manifestations and Origins* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 2: "The distinction between the words 'snake' and 'serpent' is a dim one in popular parlance, but it involves more than a linguistic subtlety. The former is the native English word and far more commonly used; the latter is considered alien and sometimes reserved for venomous or larger species. A snake is merely a zoological entity, but 'serpent'...opens up vast metaphorical possibilities."

[33] Cirlot, *Dictionary of Symbols,* 285. See also Mundkur, *Cult of the Serpent,* 5: "It [the serpent] has been cursed. It has been worshipped. It would be hard to find a society that does not mingle the 'insidious and cold and contemptible' ophidian aspects with the 'terrible and powerful and beautiful' ones."

[34] The most comprehensive introduction is the H. Gossen and A. Steier article "Schlange (Arten)," in *RE* 2A.1.521-557. This alphabetical collection has its defects, however; for other aspects of identification, see Gow and Scholfield, *Nicander,* 19-21.

place.[35] In some cases the magical forces associated with the serpent have often been attributed to the supposed sharpness of its eyesight, which was reputed to have hypnotic power over its intended victims; this belief is presumably attributed to the fact that the *Ophidia* have no eyelids and cannot close the eyes.[36] In fact, two of the Greek names given the reptile, the common terms ὄφις and δράκων, were derived by the ancients from words having to do with sight.[37] This magical power may also work against malign influence as well: on ancient amulets, medallions, and lamps the serpent was often represented attacking the evil eye, itself a cause for physical ailments, most notably in the present context, sexual debility.[38]

Nor are cultural associations in the sexual realm limited by considerations of gender.[39] For example, both the Babylonian vampiric snake-goddess Lilitu and the Scandanavian serpent-king Wivern demonstrate the reptile's close identification with an external expression of unbridled sexuality.[40] In Greco-Roman culture the association between an aggressive, consuming sexuality and the serpent is perhaps best evidenced by the witch figure Lamia. Accounts of this creature present a picture of a blood-thirsty yet seductive female monster with the upper body of an alluring woman and a lower

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[35] Mundkur, *Cult of the Serpent*, 5. Note too (6, 8) Mundkur's basic premise that human reaction to serpents, overwhelmingly one of fear (ophidiophobia), is rooted in a deep primate aversion to the sinuousness of reptilian locomotion.

[36] F. T. Elworthy, "Evil Eye," in *ERE* 4. 610. See also Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald, *The World of Reptiles* (London: Pelham Books, 1968), 40.

[37] E.g., *Etym. Gud.*: ὄφις from ὄπτω; Σ Aristoph. *Plut.* 733: δράκω from δέρκω; *Etym. Mag.*: διὰ τὸ δρᾶσθαι κακῶς ἢ λυμαίνεσθαι ἢ παρὰ τὸ δέρκω τὸ βλέπω ("because of [the verb] 'to be treated badly' or 'to harm' or derived from *derko*, 'to see'"). Festus *De sign. verb.* 4. s.v: *Dracones dicti* ἀπὸ τοῦ δέρκεσθαι, quod est videre ("Snakes are named from [the verb] *derkesthai*, which is 'to see'").

[38] G. Lafaye, "Fascinum, Fascinus," in DS 2.2.987 with figs. 2887 and 2888. See also Chapter Two, 95 and n. 119.

[39] Extended discussion in Philip E. Slater, *The Glory of Hera* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), 80-83. In advising caution in the understanding of his approach to his entire work, however, Slater himself reminds us that his strategy "has been to make sweeping approximations naturally with as much care and rigor as possible, but with the clear recognition that many specific examples and connections may prove, on more informed examination, to be useless or misleading...and the lay reader should be warned not to mistake abundance for expertise, but to treat details with caution."

[40] The former haunts the dreams of young men and drains them of their vitality. See Brian J. Frost, *The Monster with a Thousand Faces; Guises of the Vampire in Myth and Literature*, (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Press, 1989), 6. The story of Wivern and its sexual implications are discussed at length in Bengt Holbek, *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales* (Helsinki: Academica Scientiarum Fennica, 1987), 460-483. There are many other examples from cultures worldwide; see J. A. McCulloch, "Serpent Worship (Introductory and Primitive)," *ERE* 11.399-411 and especially Mundkur, *Cult of the Serpent*, chapter four (172-208): "The Serpent as Sexual Symbol."

body of a poisonous serpent that destroyed its male victim with venom.[41] A similar but less deadly female creature coerced Heracles to lie with her and bore him three sons.[42] Similarly, the serpent is associated with the male sexual instinct in a number of mythological and historical accounts in which a deity assumes the form of a serpent. Such tales include the story of Olympias, mother of Alexander, whose close association with serpents in cultic ritual may have given rise to the stories that she was impregnated by a god in the form of a serpent; other accounts were recorded about Aratus and Scipio.[43] In this regard the serpent is actually representative of the sexuality of either gender with little distinction made between the male and female of the reptile, a concept seen in tales from Ovid and other authors.[44]

The magical elements that are associated with serpents intersect with their association with sexuality as well. Like the various animals discussed earlier, these elements often originate in the visual aspects of the serpent's body itself.[45] The result is that it was subsequently used in erotic magic, evidence for which can be found in the literary record. For instance, Propertius incorporates the concept into his description of amorous enchantment while Lucan mentions the skin of the horned viper used in a similar procedure.[46] A closer association of serpent and male sexuality can be seen in the suggested identification of the reptile with the male organ in ritual practices during which both serpent and φαλλός came to be symbolically representative of a god such as Dionysus, Zeus, or Sabazios.[47] This combina-

[41] Although not specifically named as such, the Lamia is described by Dio Chrysostom *Orat.* 5.12-14. For sources of the story of Lamia and an extensive discussion of the figure in its cultural context, see Alexander Scobie, *Apuleius and Folklore* (London: The Folklore Society, 1983), 22-30.

[42] Herodotus *Hist.* 4.8.3-9.3. She is described (4.9.1) as μειξοπάρθενόν τινα ἔχιδνα διφυέα ("a double-form viper mixed-maiden"). See Elizabeth Vandiver, *Heroes in Herodotus: The Interaction of Myth and History*, Studien zur klassichen Philologie 56 (Frankfurt: Lang, 1991), 171-182.

[43] Plutarch *Alexander* 2.4-6, 3, Lucian *Dial. mort.* 13; Pausanias 2.10.3; Livy 26.9.7.

[44] For examples see E. N. Genovese, "The Serpent Leitmotif in the *Metamorphoses*," in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, ed. Carl Deroux, vol. 3 (Brussels, Collection Latomus, 1983), 148 and n. 21.

[45] Mundkur (*Cult of the Serpent*, 9) advises caution, however, in taking the psychoanalytical approach to symbols to the extreme and singles out La Barre's identification of the serpent with male sexuality because of its independent "will" and erect posture as particularly excessive and unfounded.

[46] Propertius 3.6.28: *et lecta exuctis anguibus ossa trahunt* ("And they draw bones selected from dried out serpents"); Lucan 6.669: *Viventis adhuc Libyci membrana cerastae* ("the skin of a still-living Lybian horned viper").

[47] See McCulloch, "Serpent Worship," 406 and references. For a general (and citationless) treatment, see M. Oldfield Howey, "The Serpent as Phallic Emblem," in *A Treasury of Snake Lore*, ed. Brandt Aymar (New York: Greenberg, 1956), 42-49.

tion of magical elements and sexuality lies at the very core of this investigation of the representation of impotence.

The direct identification of the penis with serpents, moreover, is an idea long established in abuse literature and comedy where it finds concrete expression in wordplay.[48] That such references could be quickly recognized by an audience points to the idea's cultural persistence; and like other popular concepts drawn from the natural world, the identification is perhaps best attested in Aristophanes. In a scene from *Lysistrata* marked by *double entendres,* one of the women seeking an excuse to return to her husband mentions the sight of the protective snake of the Acropolis, the imagery of which also suggests to the audience the limp penis (758-759):[49]

> ἀλλ᾽ οὐ δύναμαι ᾽γωγ᾽ οὐδὲ κοιμᾶσθ᾽ ἐν πόλει,
> ἐξ οὗ τὸν ὄφιν εἶδον τὸν οἰκουρόν ποτε.
>
> But I can't sleep on the citadel
> From the time when once I saw the guardian snake

In another Aristophanic production an even clearer picture of the serpent's close connection to and identification with the limp, sexually useless male organ appears in an old woman's curse upon a young girl (*Eccles.* 906-910):

> ἐπέσοι σου τὸ τρῆμα
> τό τ᾽ ἐπίκλιντρον ἀποβάλοιο
> βουλομένη σποδεῖσθαι,
> κἀπὶ τῆς κλίνης ὄφιν εὕροις
> καὶ προσελκύσαιο...
> βουλομένη φιλῆσαι.
>
> May your hole collapse
> And may you throw away your couch
> When you're looking to get laid.
> And may you find a limp snake on your bed
> And may you wrestle with it ...
> When you're wanting to make love.

In Greek epigram ὄφις can also represent the penis, and in one case punning on two common words for the snake appears (*AP* 11.22):

Modern parallels in other cultural contexts are recorded by Rosan A. Jordan, "The Vaginal Serpent and Other Themes from Mexican-American Folklore," in *Women's Folklore, Women's Culture,* ed. Rosan A. Jordan and Susan J. Kalcik, Publications of the American Folklore Society, vol. 8 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 26-44 and especially 26-36 where serpents (or lizards) replace the phallus in the violation of women.

[48] See Henderson, "Maculate Muse," 127 and nn. 108-109 for further references.

[49] Taaffe, "Aristophanes and Women," 66-67. Note as well, however, that the snake is among the symbols of Athena emphasized in the episode: Douglas M. MacDowell, Aristophanes and Athens: An Introduction to the Plays (Oxford: University Press, 1995), 242.

Ἔστι Δράκων τις ἔφηβος, ἄγαν καλός· ἀλλά, δράκων ὤν,
πῶς εἰς τὴν τρώγλην ἄλλον ὄφιν δέχεται;

There's a certain young man, Draco, so very pretty.
But being a snake, how's he get another snake into his hole?[50]

Although direct reference to the penis as a snake is less frequent in Latin literature, the association is not unknown.[51] But in a way similar to those examples cited earlier, it is in the literature of abuse that an association between the penis and a snake is clearly made. In the *Carmina Priapea* the poet/narrator uses a Latin equivalent of ὄφις in addressing first Priapus and then the stiff penis of the god, thereby calling down ruin upon his ever-erect organ.[52] While the relatively few other literary examples suggesting a close connection of the snake with the penis contribute little more in the way of certainty, the logical visual association of a limp penis with a snake seems likely enough in light of the Greek examples.[53]

The behavior of the serpent also contributes to its identification with the penis. As might be expected, the sinuous movement previously discussed in the case of the lizard applies as well to serpents and accentuates that sexual association.[54] The perceived ability of both reptiles to actually revitalize themselves was another characteristic that was accepted as fact. Aelian reports that the lizard, even when it is cut in two, continues to move as two independent living parts and can rejoin itself to continue life as before.[55] This concept is seen even more clearly, however, in another habit of these reptiles, that of sloughing the skin as they molt. For example, Aristotle, in a

[50] For further references and other animal terms, see Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 30. See also Skoda, *Médecine Ancienne,* 160-161.

[51] For a suggestion of this relationship in the Roman mind, cf. Suetonius's story of Atia's impregnation by a serpent in a temple of Apollo, the serpentine markings that later appeared on her body, and the eventual birth of Augustus (*Aug.* 94.4). See Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 30 who also cites Firmicus Maternus *De errore* 10.

[52] 83.33 (Bücheler): *licebit aeger angue lentior cubes,* on which see Chapter One 40-41 and Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 31.

[53] The evidence is relatively sparse as Adams (*Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 30) has pointed out. My own feeling is that the perception may have been more widespread than is evidenced in Latin literature.

[54] Of the four kinds of movements proper exhibited by snakes, the so-called "serpentine," a motion in which the animal seems to swim over the ground, is the most common and would correspond to the sinuously suggestive movements called for here. For a complete and understandable discussion of the locomotion of snakes, see Vesey-FitzGerald, *World of Reptiles,* 64-67. Mundkur (*Cult of the Serpent,* 80) emphasizes the "mental discomfiture" a serpent's locomotion generates in humans.

[55] *NA* 2.23. The reptilian spinal cord acts almost independently of the animal's weak brain. In the case of serpents, this often results in a prolonged and vigorous writhing of the severed parts (Mundkur, *Cult of the Serpent,* 74-75).

scientific treatment of the phenomenon, calls this molted skin γῆρας and suggests that the sloughing of skin is the equivalent of casting off old age;[56] the use of a similar zoological term to denote the aged is attested in the popular idiom of comedy.[57] In the *Kyranides*, on the other hand, a view much closer to the popular concept is attested; here the process is described as an actual rejuvenation by making a clear distinction between the sloughed skin and the old age of the snake itself (2.30.2-8):

> Οὗτος ὅταν γηράσῃ καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ἀμβλυθῶσι, θέλει πάλιν νέος γενέσθαι ... καὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκθλίψας ἀποβάλλει τὸ δέρμα αὐτοῦ, μεθ' οὗ καὶ τὸ γῆρας· γίνεται νέος ἀπολαβὼν καὶ τὸ ὁρᾶν ὀξέως.
>
> When it gets old and its eyes blur, it wishes to be young again...and squeezing its body, it casts aside its skin and its old age along with it; casting that off, it becomes young and its sight becomes sharp.[58]

Indeed, the sloughing of the skin and the vital appearance of the animal afterwards represent symbolically its rejuvenation in many cultures.[59] On a more speculative level, moreover, another complex of beliefs identifies the serpent both with the inner essence of life, the ψυχή, which continues to live on even after death and has associations with the genitals, and with the cerebro-spinal fluid, the basis for life; accordingly, even after death it is the serpent form that remains.[60] Therefore, granted that the association of the limp penis with both the lizard and the serpent was an accepted concept, this

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[56] The full zoological description is given at *HA* 7.17. 600b15-34. The word γῆρας is the usual term for the exoskeleton of crustaceans and for the pupa of insects. The snake, however, is the standard against which the molt of other animals is judged; see *HA* 5.17: ἐκδύνουσι δὲ τὸ κέλυφος τοῦ ἔαρος, ὥσπερ οἱ ὄφεις τὸ καλούμενον γῆρας ("They shed the shell in the springtime, just as serpents [shed] what is called the *geras*"). While Aelian also calls attention to this activity by reptiles in general (*NA* 11.37), he incorrectly includes the salamander among these. Interestingly, Aristotle (*De mir. ausc.* 66) reports that the cast-off skin benefitted certain reptiles as well: τὸν δὲ γαλεώτην, ὅταν ἐκδύσηται τὸ δέρμα, κάθαπερ οἱ ὄφεις ἐπιστραφέντα καταπίνειν ("[It is reported] that the gecko, whenever the skin is shed, turns about and swallows it down, the way serpents do"). In reality the sloughing of the skin is a misnomer. Only the horny outer layer, which also covers the eyes and does not expand as the animal grows, is scraped off to reveal the true skin that grows with the body. See Vesey-FitzGerald, *World of Reptiles*, 92.

[57] Ar. *Vespae* 545: καλούμεθ' ἀντωμοσιῶν κελύφη ("We'll be called 'husks of affidavits'").

[58] The reference to the sharpness of sight derives from the cloudiness of the serpent's eyes as the molt takes place and to the restoration of clear vision after it has been completed.

[59] Tupet, *La Magie*, 65: "La mue du serpent, capable dépouiller sa vielle enveloppe pour en revetir une nouvelle, est, en effet, considérée comme un symbole de rajeunissement et de vitalité. De multiples légendes de tous pays associent le serpent à des résurrections."

[60] Onians, *Origins*, 205-207.

perceived revitalization by the serpent may then be extended to a sexual reawakening of the human organ.

Other factors in the association are prominent as well. As I have shown in Chapter Two, the idea of a poisonous substance carried with it magical associations and was derived specifically from the concept of love magic as well. Like other animal secretions such as *castoreum*, the venom of serpents contributes to their association not only with male sexuality in a general way but with male sexual dysfunction in particular. This connection with sexuality, however, is bound up not only with with the deadly effects of the poison itself but also with the manner in which the substance progresses through the body, resembling in some ways the physical manifestations of other afflictions.[61] For example, the progression of a toxin coursing through the body results in the deadening of physical sensation as it threatens the innate heat of an organism; indeed, the best example of the deathlike cooling of a toxin is Plato's description of Socrates and his ingestion of hemlock.[62] In terms of sexuality an innate coldness of a substance can act directly to deaden sexual function; for example, to the ancients the chaste-tree (ἄγνος) was reputed to repress the sexual drive.[63]

In contrast to poisons derived from vegetable sources, in the case of serpent venoms the eventual death of the victim is preceded and accompanied by a wide variety of gruesome symptoms which proceed throughout the body; one result of the toxin is even the swelling of the penis.[64] Much in the manner of a contrastive reaction reminiscent of malleable sympathetic forces manipulated to opposing outcomes, in some cases the physical sensation of heat characterizes the tangible manifestation of the venom's progress contrasting with its

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[61] Note the discussion of "fading" in Chapter Two, 95-96.

[62] *Phaedo* 117E-118. The cooling effects of toxins are explained by Riddle (*Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 38): "Dioscorides, as Galen did later on, called toxicity from the opium poppy, hemlock, and other toxins as being cooling presumably because their use resulted in a deadening effect or loss of sensitivity. It was possibly fatal, resulting in complete loss of innate heat. This is the presumed reason that extreme toxins were cooling." See also 109 and 173.

[63] Σ Nicander *Theriaca* 71 (Crugnola, 61): ψυχρός ἐστι καὶ τὰς πρὸς συνουσίαν ἐπείχων ὁρμάς ("It is cold, preventing urges to intercourse"). See H. von Staden, "Spiderwoman and the Chaste Tree: The Semantics of Matter," *Configurations* 1.1 (1993), 23-56, esp. 32-36, 52-55.

[64] Philumenus (*De ven. anim.*18.2) ascribes this to the horned viper: κεράστης: καὶ τὸ μὲν αἰδοῖον τείνεται ("*Cerastes*: even the genitals are stretched"), and according to Paulus Aeginetus (5.19) the bite of the asp (ἀσπίς) also has such an effect. See also Hopfner, *Sexualleben*, 82-83 for other types of animals whose venoms work in the same way. The results of being envenomated are truly horrific (Mundkur, *Cult of the Serpent*, 52): "swelling...spasms, drooling, vomiting...hemorrhage...oozing of the blood from bodily orifices, and varied combinations of effects resulting from the neurotoxic and hemolytizing effects of the particular poison involved."

ultimate chilling result.[65] The most notable example of this is the bite of the διψάς, the "thirst-snake," whose intense physical effects on the body are reported by Nicander, Aelian, and Philumenos.[66] A graphic, if somewhat melodramatic, description of the consequences of its poisoning is vividly incorporated into the literary milieu by Lucan in his *Bellum Civile* as he describes the aftermath of a such a bite (9.741-746):

> Ecce subit virus tacitum, carpitque medullas
> Ignis edax calidaque incendit viscera tabe.
> Ebibit umorem circum vitalia fusum
> Pestis et in sicco linguam torrere palato
> Coepit; defossos iret qui sudor in artus,
> Non fuit, atque oculos lacrimarum vena refugit.
>
> Look! The silent venom rises, and a voracious fire seizes the marrow,
> Setting alight the burning innards with a wasting decay.
> The destruction drinks in the moisture about the life organs,
> And begins to enflame the tongue in the parched palate.
> No sweat was left to go to the exhausted joints,
> And the ducts of tears leave the eyes dry.

Because of these particular effects, the διψάς was also called the "burning serpent" (ὄφις καύσων); it was also known as the "inflater" (πρηστήρ) because according to some authorities, the extreme thirst was accompanied by an inflammation of the heart and, eventually, of the whole body.[67] For his part, Lucan makes clear distinctions among the effects of individual types of venomous serpents in his account; and although his is a literary approach, the description of a victim of the πρηστήρ demonstrates how its effects were perceived (*BC* 9.791-797):

> Nasidium Marsi cultorem torridus agri
> Percussit prester. Illi rubor igneus ora
> Succendit, tenditque cutem pereunte figura
> Miscens cuncta tumor
> . . . .
> Ipse latet penitus congesto corpore mersus,
> Nec lorica tenet distenti pectoris auctum.

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[65] Despite the sensation of heat from the ingestion of a toxin, the cooling effects can result in death. See Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 38.

[66] Nicander *Ther.* 334-358; Aelian *NA* 6.51; Philumenus *De ven. anim.* 20. The διψάς has been identified according to the Linnaean system as either *Cerastes vipera* (Gossen-Steier) or as *Vipera prester* (Brenning), on which see Gow and Scholfield, *Nicander*, 176. Illustration of *Cerastes vipera* in Zdenek Vogel, *Reptiles and Amphibians*, trans. and rev. Gwynne Vevers (London: Studio Vista, 1964), fig. 217.

[67] As might be expected, such terminology is far from uniform. For example, while Aelian calls the διψάς by both of the above names, Philumenos makes a definite distinction between διψάς and πρηστήρ, although he does call the former καύσων ὄφις. For an example of similar confusion of terms, cf. Pliny *NH* 32.17.46, where the *dipsas* is also called *seps* and *elops*, the one a serpent, the other a type of fish.

A burning "inflater" struck Nasidius, a farmer from the Marsian field.
A fiery redness inflamed his face, and with his shape fading,
The swelling mixed everything together and stretched his skin.
. . . .
He himself lies hidden, immersed inside his swollen body.
And his armor does not hold the increase in his distended chest.

Popular perceptions of magical elements associated with serpents and their venom are at play as well in Lucan's literary interpretation of the serpents infesting the Libyan landscape. For example, the victim of the πρηστήρ is a member of the Italian tribe of the Marsi, the reputed descendants of Circe who in Roman times were famous for their abilities to exert magical control over snakes.[68] Ironically, however, in this instance Nasidius's inborn protection against the venom of the serpents of Libya seems to have of been little avail.[69] On the other hand, Lucan's account of the supernatural talents of the indigenous Psylli depicts their activities as a much more effective defense against the reptiles. Physically, they are well protected from the venom of serpents (*BC* 9.893-895):

Par lingua potentibus herbis,
Ipse cruor tutus nullumque admittere virus
Vel cantu cessante potens.

Their language is the equal of powerful herbs,
Their very blood is safe and is powerful enough to admit no poison,
Even when a magic charm fails.

Lucan also describes in detail their use of charms, herbs, and various ritual activities to drive out serpents or to cure their venom.[70] Significantly, their typical fumigation techniques used to repel the reptiles incorporate a variety of animal and plant substances (*BC* 9.915-921), the most important of which is *habrotonum,* claimed by Lucan to be especially effective against serpents.[71] In addition to the

[68] For example, Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 16.11.1-2 and Pliny *NH* 25.5.11. Further discussion in Giulia Piccaluga, "I Marsi e gli Hirpi," in *Magia: Studi di Storia della religioni in memoria di Raffela Garosi,* ed. Paolo Xella (Rome: Bulzoni, 1976), 207-210 with references.

[69] Once marginalized as purveyors of a dangerous though useful power, by Lucan's day the Marsi seem to have been socially, culturally, and politically assimilated into the general Italian population; and with this enculturation came the loss of their magic practices and power. See Oliver Phillips, "Singing Away Snakebite: Lucan's Magical Cures," in Mirecki and Meyer, *Ancient Magic,* 399-400.

[70] *BC* 9.898-937 on which see Phillips, "Singing Away Snakebite," 396-399.

[71] *BC* 9.920-921: *fumoque gravem serpentibus urunt habrotonum* ("And they burn southernwood, oppressive for serpents in its vapor"). Cf. Pliny, *NH* 21.92.161-162: *serpentes fugat* ("It puts serpents to flight"). Dioscorides (*De mat. med.* 3.24.3) advises that it be strewn about (στιβαδευόμενον) with similar effect and that it may also be taken with wine to heal serpent bite. According to André (*Lexique,* 155) *habrotonum*

singing of magical incantations for healing, saliva plays an important role as well: the Psylli were able to stop the spread of serpent venom in a victim's body by delimiting the area around the bite with their spittle; and in the event that their magical incantations failed to draw out all of the poison, their protective saliva allowed the venom to be drawn orally and to be spit out harmlessly (*BC* 925-937).[72]

Specific healing properties combined with the power to ward off serpents, moreover, can be found in particular plants that were closely associated by the ancients with snakes. In view of the accepted associations between the serpent and the penis, the resultant implications for male sexuality can be made clearer by considering the close relationship between serpents and those plants that exhibit snake-like characteristics, individual growth habits suggestive of a propensity toward sexual activity, and structural features that are visually evocative of the male sex organ. For example, various vinelike and trailing plants, often twining about the stems of surrounding plants or climbing by means of tendrils, were in general considered effective against snakes according to ancient authorities.[73] Grape leaves were recommended for treatment against the bite of the πρηστήρ,[74] and Dioscorides reports

(ἀβρότονον) may be identified alternately either as *Santolina chamaecyparissus* or as one of several species of the genus *Artemesia*, all of which are strongly aromatic herbs of the Aster family (*Compositae*). For more specific identification of these latter, see Monique Moisan, *Lexique du Vocabulaire Botanique d'Hippocrate* (Québec: Université Laval, 1990), 23.

[72] Cf. Mundkur, *Cult of the Serpent*, 52. The mental, if not the physical, distress brought about by a serpent bite offers ample opportunity for intermediaries to administer curative procedures based on magic or on folk medicine; because of the wide range of variables that contribute to the seriousness of the reaction, these are often successful. In reality such measures as oral extraction of the venom, preferably in conjunction with a tourniquet to stop further translation through the body, must be undertaken immediately after the bite if there is to be any hope of success.

[73] Actual identification is problematic, but roughing out the general characteristics of these vining plants will clarify how they were perceived and what features contributed to their association with the aspects of serpents and sexuality that inform this investigation. Plants called βρυωνία belong to two groups. The genus *Bryonia* is placed in the cucumber family (*Cucurbitaceae*) and is marked by rapid and sprawling growth, aided by tendrils that quickly react to environmental factors; a typical plant is *B. dioica*, illustrated in Dietmar Aichele, *Was Blüht Denn Da?* (Stuttgart: Franckh, 1984), 73. To the yam family (*Dioscoreaceae*) belongs *Tamus communis*, whose growth above the ground springs from a large underground tuber but whose twining stems are without tendrils; it is illustrated in Baumann, *Die Griechische Pflanzenwelt*, 117 fig. 234. The ἄμπελος (*Vitis vinifera*), a member of the grape family (*Vitaceae*), is the familiar cultivated grape whose growth is aided (like the species of *Bryonia*) by grasping tendrils. Linguistic distinctions of ἄμπελος are suggested in the Index of Plants to Hort's Loeb Edition of Theophrastus's *HP* s.v.; illustrations in Nicholson, *Food Plants*, 91.

[74] Philumenus *De ven. anim.* 19.2.26. Cf. also Aelian *NA* 6.51 (discussed above) on the διψάς, also called the πρηστήρ, and note the relationship between pneumatic swelling, diet, and male potency.

that ashes of grapevine twigs possess a burning character and that they are effective for snakebite.[75] Pliny contends that grape vinegar prevents the ill effects of all kinds of venom but acts as an antidote to asp bite even when merely held in a container, another clear demonstration that the balance of magical concepts previously noted are at work even in medically oriented contexts.[76]

The growth habits of such vining plants contribute to these ancient perceptions, and they also link considerations of sexuality to associations with serpents. Dioscorides (*De mat. med.* 4.182-183) discriminates between the kinds of vine which he calls ἄμπελος and that some others call a variety of names, including the more scientifically accurate βρυωνία; neither should be identified with the cultivated grape but ought rather to be referred to the genus *Bryonia*.[77] Reflecting some awareness of modern distinctions between the two varieties at the species level, the white (ἄμπελος λευκή) and the black (ἄμπελος μέλαινα), he specifies that the former is also called by some the "serpent grape" (ὀφιοστάφυλον) and is considered the more effective against snakebite.[78] Such statements illuminate the reasons for the close associations of vining plants with serpents in that they derive from the visual linking of twining plant stems or coiling tendrils with serpentine movements and shape. Such associations may be seen in evidence from rituals and religious contexts as well.[79]

Upon inspection it becomes evident how the growth habits of these particular vining plants added to their perceived associations with sexuality in ways similar to the associations made with the cultivated grape. A close linkage, based on etymological and magical grounds, can be seen in the case of Dioscorides' two vines. The first consideration is that the name βρυωνία ultimately derives from βρύειν ("to swell, to teem") and is based on perceptions of the abundant and rapid growth of the vines. This particular designation of the plant from its inherent growth characteristics echoes the use of

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[75] *De mat. med.* 5.117: καταπλασθεῖσα δὲ σὺν ὄξει ἑρπετόδηκτα καὶ κυνόδηκτα ἰᾶται ("Applied as a poultice with vinegar, they heal snakebite and dogbite"). For an overview of the vine, see Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 142-144.

[76] Pliny *NH* 23.27.56-57.

[77] See J. Berendes, *Des Pedanios Dioskurides aus Anazarbos Arzneimittellehre in Fünf Bücher* (Stuttgart: Enke, 1902; reprint, Wiesbaden: Sändig, 1970), 469-471.

[78] *De mat. med.* 4.182.3: δυεῖν δραχμῶν ὁλκὴ ποθεῖσα ἐχιοδήκτοις βοηθεῖ... ("A draught of two drachma helps snakebite"); 4.183.2: ἡ ῥίζα [τῆς ἀμπέλου μελαίνης] δύναμιν ὁμοίαν τῇ λευκῇ κέκτηται, πρὸς τὰ αὐτὰ ἁρμόζουσαν, ἧττον μέντοι ἐνεργεῖ ("The root [of the black *ampelos*] possesses a property similar to the white, suitable for the same things, [but] it works less effectively").

[79] Cf. the account of the rites in Plutarch, *Alexander* 2.5-6 where the snakes supplied by Olympias are associated with the ivy sacred to Dionysus.

terms such as ὑβρίζειν, ἐξυβρίζειν, and φυλλομανεῖν in indicating an ancient awareness of the excessive and unrestrained nature of vegetative growth and a concurrent application to the world of human activity and sexuality.[80] The second observation is that the ἄμπελος λευκή, here specifically identifed as βρυωνία (scientifically *Bryonia cretica*),[81] appears in the *Kyranides* as an important element in magical remedies for a wide variety of ailments; it is, however, considered especially powerful as a sexual stimulant and cure for impotence (*Kyranides* 1.21-23):

> Γίγαρτα δὲ ἐκ τῶν πεπιεσμένων βοτρύων λειωθέντα μετὰ βραχέως τοῦ προειρημένου λίθου διδόμενα ἐν ποτῷ τοῖς παραλυθεῖσι τὸ αἰδοῖον πολλὴν ἔντασιν παρέξει·
>
> The stones from the squeezed grapes with a bit of the aforementioned stone (ἀετίτης λίθος) [and] given in a drink to those paralyzed in the genitals will cause a great erection.

There was, then, a link between the properties of vining plants noted for their vigorous growth and those characteristics that associated them in the popular mind with both the serpentine and the sexual.

Now as I have already demonstrated, in the case of plant structures, particularly of the genus *Allium*, the identification of the plant stalk with the sexually aroused penis is based on the three general visual considerations of length, thinness, and cylindricality; in the case of the herbaceous growth of plants above the ground, these features are coupled with a sense of progressive swelling.[82] A prominent and

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[80] See Chapter Three, 101-102.

[81] *Kyranides* 1.1.3-4: Ἄμπελος λευκὴ ἱερωτάτη, ἡ πρώτη καὶ θαυμαστὴ βοτάνη, ἥτις ἐστὶν ἡ θεία ἡ λεγομένη βρυωνία ("The white grapevine is most sacred, the first, and the most amazing plant, which is divine and is called *bryonia*"). For Linnaean nomenclature see Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 13.

[82] As I have tried to show throughout this investigation, it is my belief that the close proximity of humans to the natural world is responsible for such long-lasting associations. However, other phallic associations, primarily those with the more direct involvement of human creativity, also exist. It is in those cases rather than in the present vegetative examples that E. S. Harland's advisement to caution ("Phallism," *ERE* 9.819), still bears repeating: "In identifying phallic symbols other than realistic representations, however, the greatest circumspection is required. All sorts of objects have been claimed as phallic by writers whose imagination outpaces proof. Some actual or fancied resemblance has been too often deemed adequate evidence, without showing the beliefs attached to the object, or the rites performed in relation to it." R. D. Jameson ("Phallism," in *Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, ed. Maria Leach [New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1949], 2.865-866) discusses misplaced phallic imagery in church steeples and YMCA symbols. Phallic imagery forms a major part of the Jungian interpretation of symbols. See also, for example, Eugene Monick, *Phallos: Sacred Image of the Masculine* (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1987), 32-36 and the photograph of a Japanese stone grouping that the author presents as similar to a phallic dream he himself had had. Cf also his discussion of the *axis mundi* and the World Tree (72-76). Caution indeed.

specific connection with serpents now allows us to concentrate the discussion on a relatively small number of individual plant varieties from the arum family (*Araceae*), some of whose members are familiar for their decorative foliage and flowers while others are cultivated for food.[83] Like the genus *Allium* and related genera of the amaryllis family, the flowering structure of the arum family has also prompted visual association both with serpents and with the male sex organ. This connection originates in the structure of an elongated, cylindrical projection, technically known as the spadix, upon which the tiny true flowers emerge, usually at least partially hidden at its base. The spadix itself is often enveloped by a surrounding floral sheath, the spathe, which may or may not enclose it completely.[84] In some genera the floral structure's resemblance to the phallus becomes particularly striking; this is especially so when the spathe at first tightly encloses the spadix, which then protrudes slowly from the enveloping structure as it develops toward maturity.[85] It is the emergence of the spadix from the spathe, in much the same way as the flower cluster of garlic does from its spathe (φύσιγξ), that allows the visual association to be made with the protrusion of the *glans penis* from its surrounding foreskin.

Among the aroids there are a number of plants whose vegetative structures prompt additional associations by their manner of growth and appearance because of the serpentine character of their surface markings and coloration. These distinctive features enhance and enlarge the horizons of visual identification and complement the primary associations of stalk, serpent, and phallus. For example, Pliny describes the Spanish *dracunculus* (*NH* 25.6.18):

> in eadem provincia cognovi in agro hospitis nuper ibi repertum dracunculum appellatum caulem pollicari crassitudine, versicoloribus viperarum maculis, quem ferebant contra omnium morsus esse remedio...

[83] The jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaemea triphyllum*) and skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) are familar wild examples from North America; caladiums (*Caladium spp.*) and elephant's-ear (*Colocasia* spp.) are common garden and border plants. The former genus also includes the taro (*Caladium antiquorum*), known elsewhere as dasheen or eddo. Illustrated in Nicholson, *Food Plants*, 180-181. Many common house plants are aroids as well, e.g., the philodendron, chinese evergreen, and diffenbachia.

[84] Bailey, *Manual*, 179: "The inflorescence is the most characteristic feature, being a densely flowered simple spadix subtended or surrounded by a bract (the spathe) which is often showy and constitutes 'the flower' of gardeners, as in the cultivated calla..."

[85] William Thiselton-Dyer, "On Some Ancient Plant Names III," *JP* 34 (15), 299 s.v. *Colocasia*: "[The flowering structure] has given rise to an indecorous suggestion." A good example of the general structure is the *Amorphophallus titanum* illustrated in Hutchinson, *Families of Flowering Plants*, 2.631 fig. 389. See also the illustrations of the typical species here considered: Plates 6 (*Arum maculatum*) and 7 (*Arum italicum*). Note in the latter the cylindrical, unopened floral structures in the background.

In that same province I recognized in the field of my host something just discovered there: a stalk called the dracunculus ["little viper"] as thick as the thumb, with a variety of colors and the markings of vipers, which is said to be a cure for the bites of all [creatures]...

This plant was also considered miraculous in that its annual appearance, growth cycle, and eventual disappearance corresponded to those of serpents themselves, and as such it served as a natural indicator of the seasonal presence of the reptiles (*NH* 25.6.19):

aliud miraculum exerenti se terra ad primas serpentium vernationes bipedali fere altitudine, rursusque cum isdem in terram condenti, nec omnino occultato eo apparet serpens, vel hoc per se satis officioso naturae munere, si tantum praemoneret tempusque formidinis demonstraret.

Another miraculous thing is that the plant pushes itself from the earth at the time of the first skin-sloughings of snakes, [grows] to a height of almost two feet and again hides itself in the earth along with those same snakes; nor does any serpent appear at all when the plant is hidden. This event would be an obliging benefit of nature in itself, if it were only to give prior warning and show the time of the danger.

The *dracunculus* was well known to the ancients. Theophrastus calls it δρακόντιον ἄρον ("dragon arum"),[86] and it was also known as δρακοντία.[87] In current botanical taxonomy it is identified as *Dracunculus vulgaris* Schott.[88]

Dioscorides describes δρακόντιον at length and gives considerable information about its useful properties and medical applications.[89]

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[86] *HP* 7.12.2. See Plate 8. The rocky terrain in which the specimen is growing would be very hospitable to snakes.

[87] There are Latin variations as well: *dracontium, dracontea, draconteon, draconteum.* The latter two designations appear in Marcellus (*De medicamentis* 15.29; 10.58, 63) as explanations of *herba proserpinalis.* Perhaps the adjective refers not only to the goddesss Proserpina but might also suggest wordplay on the verb *proserpere,* according to LS "to creep forward" or (of plants) "to come forth imperceptibly."

[88] Polunin and Huxley, *Flowers of the Mediterranean,* 205. It was formerly designated *Arum dracunculus* L. Cf., however, Moisan, *Lexique du Vocabulaire Botanique,* 35 for the range of related species also called δρακόντιον.

[89] *De med. mat.* 2.166. That it was a familiar plant is indicated by the fact that the alternate and later manuscript description, the so-called Ps-Dioscorides (2.166 RV: δρακοντία μεγάλη), gives it many different names: e.g., ἄρον, ἴσαρον, ἴαρον, and, notably, the Roman name κόλουβρουμ (from the Latin *coluber*) with obvious reference to the serpentine appearance of the plant. (Cf. the *colubrina,* a plant identified by LS as "*bryonia, dracontea.*") Correspondences of both descriptions are close, however; in the following overview I primarily follow the former. Note also the numerous names for the species *A. dracunculus* (*Dracunculus vulgaris*) and *A. italicum* in Otto Penzig, *Flora Popolare Italiana.* 2 vols. (Genova: Orto Botanico, 1924; reprint, Bologna: Edagricole, 1972), 1.52-53; H. L. Gerth Van Wijk, *A Dictionary of Plantnames* (*sic*) (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1911), 130-132; and Heinrich Marzell, *Die Tiere in deutschen*

Importantly, he reports that the plant exhibits noticeable serpentine features (*De med. mat.* 2.166.1):

> δρακόντιον· φύλλα ἔχει κισσοειδῆ, μεγάλα, σπίλους ἔχοντα λευκούς, καυλὸν δὲ ὀρθόν, δίπηχυν, ποικίλον, ὀφιοειδῆ διαπόρφυρον τοῖς σπίλοις, βακτηρίας τὸ πάχος
>
> Drakontion: it has large leaves like ivy with white spots and a straight stalk, two cubits in height, spotted, snakelike, and shot through with purple in the form of spots, with a thickness of a cane.[90]

The plant shares characteristics of taste and appearance with other plants noted for their sexual associations, namely the grape and the general category of bulbs (*De med. mat.* 2.166.1):

> καρπὸς δὲ ἐπ' ἄκρου βοτρυοειδής, χρώματι τὸ μὲν πρῶτον χλοώδης, πεπανθεὶς δὲ κροκίζων, ἐπιδάκνων τὴν γεῦσιν, ῥίζα ποσῶς στρογγύλη, βολβοειδής, ὁμοία ἄρῳ, φλοιὸν ἔχουσα λεπτόν.
>
> The fruit at the summit [of the fruiting stalk] is grapelike, in color at first greenish yellow, in ripening saffron, bitter to the taste; the root round, bulblike and similar to the aron, having a thin husk.

Moreover, the root of the δρακόντιον has warming properties (θερμαντική) and is prescribed for a number of ailments, most notably asthmatical problems (ὀρθόπνοια).[91] But even more significant is Dioscorides' claim that δρακόντιον was an effective prophylaxis from snakebite (*De mat. med.* 2.166.2):

> φασὶ δὲ ὅτι, καὶ εἰ διατρίψει‹έ› τις τῇ ῥίζῃ τὰς χεῖρας, ἀπὸ ἐχίδνης ἄδηκτος μένει
>
> And they say that if someone should rub his hands with the root, he remains unbitten by the viper (echidna).

These features, then, combine both the medical and magical aspects of the plant based on familiar visual associations with serpents and their underlying suggestions of sexuality.

Pliny's accounts (*NH* 24.89.139-142) of *clematis, dracontium, dracunculus,* and other aroids, the related *aron* (*NH* 28.92.143-148), and the *aris* (*NH* 24.94.151) correspond to the information in Dioscorides, but it also adds other significant information about how the plants were perceived, including the observation that the *dracunculus* has a

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Pflanzennamen (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1913), 9 and 74. Many of these names are reminiscent of the association between the plant and snakes.

[90] Cf. Theophrastus *HP* 9.20.3: καυλὸν δὲ ἔχει ποικίλον ὀφιώδη ("It has a mottled, snakelike stalk"). The leaves are actually more deeply divided than the familiar ivy (*Hedera helix*). See Plate 8.

[91] This may suggest a possible connection with the operations of πνεῦμα.

root reminiscent of a snake.[92] First, his general observation of these plants reveals that several were believed to have effects on the sexual and reproductive organs and that they were characterized by a kind of inherent sexuality of substance, prompting desire and interfering with childbirth.[93] In a similar fashion the seed of the *aron* could ease the birth of young animals.[94] To this plant as well was attributed a difference between a male and female variety, the female being deemed better as nourishment because of its softness and ease of cooking; this particular aspect is reminiscent of the male and female kinds of the stone λυγγούριον and their perceived efficacy.[95] These plants have a close association with serpents as well. *Dracunculus* is to be dug under circumstances associated with magic,[96] and used as an amulet it is effective in driving off serpents because of their fear of it.[97] The plant can also be used as a cure for snake bite if taken in a potion.[98] The related *aron* has similar serpent-repelling qualities when burned, and stupifies asps with its fumes.[99] Like the

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[92] *NH* 24.91.142. While these plants are described by Pliny as related, *clematis* is presumably a species of bindweed (*Convulvulus arvensis*), a plant related rather to morning glories and noted for the size of its root. The others specified by Pliny are aroids, the same as or similar to the plants treated by Dioscorides. As is to be expected, the relationship among the varieties is based on visual aspects and on the effects of their medicinal properties. See Franz Olck, "Ἄρον," *RE* 2.1.1212-1215 for an attempt to determine modern Linnaean equivalents.

[93] *NH* 24.89.140 (of the *clematis*): *[folia] ex aceto edentium venerem stimulant* ("[The leaves] in vinegar stimulate the passion of those who eat them"); *NH* 24.92.143 (of the *dracunculus*): *Quin et ipsi Graeci inmensam posuere differentiam: semen dracunculi fervens tradendo, tantumque ei virus ut olfactum gravidis abortum inferret* ("In fact even the Greeks themselves have established a great difference [between the *dracunculus* and the *aron*] by saying that the seed of the *dracunculus* is hot and there is such a poison in it that if smelled, it brings miscarriage to pregnant women"). Cf. Theophrastus *HP* 9.20.3: σπέρματι δ' οὐ χρῶνται ("They don't use the seed").

[94] *NH* 24.92.146: *partus omnium animalium extrahit naturae circumlitum* ("Smeared around the genitalia, it draws out the offspring of all animals").

[95] *NH* 24.92.143. For the λυγγούριον, see above, Chapter Two.

[96] *NH* 24.93.149. The plant must be dug when the barley is ripening and at the time of crescent moon. Its potency is lessened if touched by iron, so, presumably, care must be taken when digging the root. Textual problems complicate the latter issue, however. In the Egyptian variety of *clematis*, furthermore, the plant exhibits a similarity in its root to that of the *aron*, itself a subject of contested identification.

[97] Isidore *Etym.* 17.9.35: *Dracontea vocata...quod eam herbam vipera timeat* ("[It] is called *dracontea*...because the viper fears the plant").

[98] *NH* 24.93.149.

[99] *NH* 24.92.148: *serpentes nidore, cum crematur, privatimque aspidas fugat aut inebriat ita ut torpentes inveniantur* ("It puts to flight serpents, especially asps, by its smell when it is burned or makes them drunk in such a way that they are found in a stupor"); the *aron* in the form of an oil, on the other hand, accomplishes the same thing: *perunctos quoque aro e lauro oleo fugiunt* ("[Serpents] also flee those people thoroughly rubbed down with the *aron* in laurel oil"). Protective fumigation against serpents by various odiferous plants was recommended by Nicander (*Ther.* 35-79) and was especially practiced by the Psylli (Lucan *BC* 9.913-921). Note also Vergil's advisement to fu-

dracunculus it could also be drunk as a treatment for snakebite.[100]

Related aroids share the same qualities. Pliny describes *dracontium* from pictures he had seen and identifies three varieties. Of the first, the *thrysus,* the flowering stalk, is the prominent feature, suggesting both serpentine and phallic imagery.[101] The leaves of the second variety, with a long, knotted root and tripartite stem, are useful against serpents, while a third has serpent-repelling properties.[102] To *aris,* a native of Egypt, Pliny ascribes magical powers: should any part touch the sexual organs of a female animal, she is driven to ruin; in comparison, in Dioscorides' account of ἀρίσαρον, presumably the equivalent of Pliny's *aris,* the very sex organ of the animal withers and wastes away.[103] Dioscorides also reports (*De mat. med.* 2.166) that drinking δρακόντιον with wine acts as a sexual stimulant.[104] When we take into account all of the foregoing considerations, it becomes evident that in the case of aroids visual elements associating them with the phallus, combined with magical and medical properties, prompted the popular perception of a close connection of these plants both to serpents and to male sexuality.

According to the sources, however, it is not only aroids which are perceptually connected with serpents and which exhibit the magical, medical, and sexual interdependencies that incorporate them into the sympathetic network in the popular mentality. The garlic plant, which I have shown earlier to have been identified visually with the aroused phallus through its characteristics of length and cylindrical tenuity and to have been linked palpably to male sexuality through its sensible properties of heating and its association with inflated swollenness, has close associations with serpents as well. Two consid-

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migation at *Geo.* 3. 414-415 (modeled on Nicander), on which see Richard Thomas, ed., *Virgil: Georgics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1988), 2.119.

[100] Pliny's account may confuse the two plants, however; see W. H. S. Jones, H. Rackham, and D. E. Eichholz, ed. and trans., *Pliny: Natural History* Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938-62), 7.106. The Egyptian *clematis* is effective against snakes also; Pliny describes it as long and thin (*longa tenuisque*) and claims for it power against serpents (*NH* 24.90.141): *adversus serpentes et privatim aspidas ex aceto pota efficax* ("Against serpents and especially asps [it is] effective when drunk in vinegar").

[101] *NH* 24.93.150. *non sine thyrso flore purpureo hoc est simile aro* ("This is [the plant], similar to the *aron,* with a *thyrsus* and with a purple flower"). Elsewhere *thyrsus* is used as a literary metaphor for the penis: Adams (*Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 28) cites *Anth. Lat.* 712.18 as an example. It is similarly used at Petronius, *Sat.* 132.8.

[102] *NH* 24.93.150.

[103] *NH* 24.93.151; Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 2.168.

[104] ἔστι δὲ οὐρητική, ὁρμάς τε πρὸς συνουσίας ἐγείρει πινομένη μετ' οἴνου ("It promotes urination, and when drunk with wine it excites the urges for intercourse"). This is repeated in the Ps-Dioscorides manuscript tradition (2.166 RV) as well: ποθεῖσα δὲ μετ' οἴνου τὰς ἐπὶ συνουσίαν ὁρμὰς κινεῖ ("Drunk with wine it promotes the urges for intercourse").

erations bear this out. The first is that Dioscorides specifically identifies a particular type of garlic as "serpent garlic" (ὀφιόσκορδον), presumably because of the twisting and coiling nature of its flowering stalk which from its very early stages bears at its terminus the typical floral structure of the genus *Allium;* corresponding Latin terminology corroborates the connection.[105] Indeed, a modern strain of garlic is similarly designated, and its growth habit and appearance attest as well to the association.[106]

The second perceptual element linking the serpent and the garlic plant lies in the plant's beneficial medical and dietary characteristics. As I have already discussed, the warming properties of garlic were recognized in both scientific and literary sources, and in both cases these reflect popular notions about the effects of the plant. In addition to this property, Dioscorides and Pliny also state that the plant produces thirst and flatulence, the former suggestive of the effects of the venomous διψάς and the latter linked closely with both the serpent itself and with sexually stimulative activity.[107] The most definitive connection between the plant and serpents, however, is Dioscorides' outright claim that garlic's curative qualities for snakebite are exceeded by no other remedy (*De mat. med.* 2.152.2):

> ἐχεοδήκτοις τε καὶ αἱμορροοῦσιν ἁρμόζει, ὡς οὐδεν ἕτερον, λαμβανομένου οἴνου συνεχῶς ἢ σὺν τῷ οἴνῳ λεανθὲν καὶ ποθέν.
>
> And it assists both those bitten by vipers and those hemorrhaging like nothing else, [when] taken together with wine or crushed and drunk with it.

This property of garlic is also attested in texts of a magical nature. In the *Kyranides* the plant is included in a preventive remedy against all

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[105] *De med. mat.* 2.152.1: ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλο ἄγριον, ὀφιόσκορδον καλούμενον ("There is even another wild [*allium*], called "serpent garlic"). The Latin designations appear in Ps-Dioscorides 2.152 RV: ὀφιόσκορδον· Ῥωμαῖοι ἄλιουμ κολοβρίνουμ, οἱ δὲ ἄλιουμ βιπερίνουμ ("Serpent garlic: the Romans [call it] *alioum colombrinoum,* others, *alioum biperinoum*"), the former deriving from *coluber,* the latter from *vipera.* Cf. the similar designation for the δρακόντιον at Ps-Dioscorides 2.166 RV (above, note 87).

[106] See Plate 3. Dioscorides' plant is presumably either *A. sativum* var. *ophioscorodon* or *A. scorodoprasum,* both commonly known in English as rocambole and viper's garlic; their common names in other languages also emphasize the similarity to serpents. See Van Wijk, *Dictionary of Plantnames,* 59-60. This particular kind of *allium* is a type of the so-called "hardneck" garlic, one that does produce floral organs and is closer to the ancestral *A. longicuspis.* Further discussion in Joanna Poncavage, "Grow Great Garlic," *Organic Gardening,* vol. 38.8 (Nov. 1991), 30-35.

[107] Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 2.152.1; Pliny's description (*NH* 20.23.57) also emphasizes its aphrodisiac qualities: *venerem quoque stimulare cum coriandro viridi tritum potumque e mero* ("And [it is thought] to stimulate passion when ground with green coriander and taken with wine"). Garlic is also included by Philumenos (*De ven. anim.* 9) in a

types of snakes;[108] and the *Geoponica* notes that in addition to its use as an ingested remedy, a salve made from garlic was considered protective against the physical harm done by serpents and other destructive animals.[109] What is most significant in all of these accounts is that the primary strength of both the healing and the preventive applications of garlic is directed against the poisons transmitted by serpents or against the madness of rabies. The obvious effects of each of these would be readily recognized and especially feared by a populace that had little understanding of the causes for the physical responses to them.

Nevertheless, such scientific and medical claims for the efficacy of garlic make it clear that the sexually stimulative effects of the plant, whose identification with the aroused penis was a commonly held association, had a curative effect upon a physically damaging and progressive debilitation of venom (*venenum*). By extending this concept to the realm of sympathetic magic, therefore, I propose that to the popular imagination the venom of serpents, destructive to basic life functions and perceived as a slowly advancing and deadening coldness, served both as the model for and as the equivalent of the maleficent witchcraft that results in the failure of male sexual function. As a result, the cures undertaken to alleviate the symptoms of impotence were similar to the dietary and medical remedies undertaken for venom-induced maladies. Importantly, the ability of the population at large to gain access to such remedies may be demonstrated by ancient references to cultivated garlic beds and to the sale of garlic on the open market.[110] Further indication of this accessibility is that the plant also appears frequently in magical texts in the company of other sexually suggestive substances.[111] Thus by availing themselves

regimen that is prophylactic against venomous bites; a tendency to cause flatulence is one of the desirable properties.

108 *Kyranides* 3.3.8-9: ἐὰν δὲ τις προφαγὼν σκόρδα πίῃ θερμὸν το αἷμα σὺν οἴνῳ, παντοῖον ἑρπετὸν οὐ φοβεῖται ("When someone first eats garlic and drinks heated blood with wine, he has no fear of any kind of serpent").

109 *Geoponica* 12.30.1: ταῦτα [τὰ σκόρδα] ... ἐχιοδήκτοις καταπλασσόμενα καὶ τρωγόμενα καὶ λυσσοδήκτοις βοήθει ("This [garlic]...in a plaster helps those bitten by vipers; and if eaten, it helps those bitten by rabid animals); 12.30.4: εἰ δέ τις προτρώγει τὸ σκόρδον, ἀβλαβὴς ἔκ τε ἑρπετῶν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων δηλητηρίων ἔσται. καὶ πληγέντας δὲ τριφθέντα καὶ ἐπιτεθέντα ἰᾶται ("If anyone eats garlic ahead of time, he will be unharmed by serpents and other harmful animals; and rubbed and eaten it heals those bitten").

110 Hesychius s.v. σκοροδών; σκοροδοπώλης: Σ Arist. *Vesp.* 680; Pollux *Onomasticon* 7.198.

111 See, for example, Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum* 2.236: 96.63-65 and commentary. Here garlic is joined with plumtree pith, cabbage, and chickpea in a iatromagical recipe that may be considered sexually stimulative in light of the content of the previous recipe.

of popular assumptions drawn from visual association, prevailing medical knowledge, and magical premises, these users were empowered to obtain relief from malign influences and their physical manifestations.

So far in this chapter I have shown how closely interwoven were the ancient perceptions of male sexuality, plants, and serpents and how a popular belief in the existence of magical sympathy led to a reliance upon an interdependent network of influence which contributed to the iatromagical efficacy of its various elements. I would like to explore next the conceptual premises whereby such medical and magical influence was seen as separable from the substances of its origin and how it was thought to exist in naturally occurring minerals and stones. In doing so, I show how this influence was deemed especially resident in certain stones altered by human craft for the express intention of providing access to remedies for male sexual dysfunction and also how the sympathetic properties of these magical objects became a readily available means of empowerment to those knowledgeable in their use.

While some of the natural substances that figure prominently in the ancient remedies for impotence were ordinarily used with little preparation aside from steps taken to ensure their preservation,[112] the majority were altered to some degree by human agency before their use. Such alterations often consisted of combining particular substances deemed especially effective with other substances of known efficacy and with otherwise inert materials, such as wine or oil, in medical and magical formulations intended either to be ingested or to be applied as a salve. As a result of this informed combination of simple preservation and purposeful alteration, itself reinforced by a popular belief in the interconnection of sympathetic magic and relying on conceptual realities expressed by physical resemblance and other perceived connections, a large number of such substances were produced to function as amulets.[113] In the amulet, then, prophylactic and curative powers benefit from the combination of the innate efficacy of substance with the considerable power

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[112] Cf. n. 3 above. According to the *Kyranides* 2.2.22-24 the penis tip of the fox ensures its wearer will also have intercourse safely (ἀβλαβῶς συνουσιάσεις) if a magical phrase (τιν βιβ ηλιθι) is written upon it in ink.

[113] Tavenner, *Studies in Magic*, 78: "[Amulets are] material objects in which no spirit resides, but which, through a specific association of ideas, become endowed with the power of taboo, and, by reason of this power, may protect their owners from disease." The definition encompasses all varieties of objects that ward off evil and protect the possessor, not only those that are worn, a point also made by Tavenner. Cf. Pliny *NH* 28.7.38, where even certain actions are considered *inter amuleta*.

of magic.[114] The inherent purpose of the latter lies in circumventing the power and the will of the gods and in usurping control over the natural world for the self-serving ends of individuals.[115] Such a concept of magic was prevalent in all strata of society in ancient times, little altered, if at all, by time and place.[116]

Alteration in itself also contributes to efficacy. This is especially so in the case of amulets fashioned from certain minerals and stones, the appearances of which vary widely. For example, the original material itself may have been shaped, carved with symbols or images, worn individually, set in a decorative arrangement with other jewelry, or used in a number of variations on the above.[117] As Mauss points out, however, two important features of the properties of substances altered for magical purposes should be understood. One is that despite the powers ascribed to both the original substances and to the objects fashioned from them, "magical attributes are not conceived as being naturally, absolutely and specifically contained in the object to which they are attached; they are always relatively extrinsic and conferred"; the other point is that specific ritual rules for collection, preparation, and use limit and direct the desired powers to specific ends.[118] The case of λιγγούριον, discussed earlier in Chapter Two is exemplary: not only is the secondary source of the "stone" an important factor in determining what general effects it will produce,

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[114] Both Theophrastus (*HP* 9.19.2-3) and Dioscorides, to a lesser degree, discounted the actual efficacy of amulets. For the latter see Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 84-87.

[115] Tavenner, *Studies in Magic*, 7: "We may therefore say that a cultured Roman would have defined magic as an art based on medicine, astrology, and religion, whereby man attempts to control the gods and thereby control natural phenomena in accordance with his own selfish desires." See also R. Gordon, "Aelian's Peony: The Location of Magic in Greco-Roman Tradition," *Comparative Criticism* 9 (1987), 60-61, who contends that the role of magic is a challenge to sanctioned authority. Cf. Carl C. Schlam, *The* Metamorphosis *of Apuleius* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 67: "Witchcraft is characterized in the *Metamorphosis* as an imposition of private will over divine governance."

[116] Tavenner, *Studies in Magic*, 7 n. 30: "Folk belief and practice [is] a phase of human mental life that shows very little variation as a result of either time or place..."

[117] See E. Labatut, "Amuletum," in DS 1.1, 254-258, especially II, "Objets artificiels portés en amulettes," and figs. 300-314. The best example of sexually efficacious stones embedded in a larger item of jewelry or clothing is the κεστὸς ἱμάς, a sort of diadem of Aphrodite decorated with carved obsidian containing the eye of a fish (κιναίδιος). See the extensive treatment in Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 195-221 and the discussion below. According to the *Kyranides* (1.10.49-100), at the touch of this strap a man will become impotent; furthermore, in eating the eye of the fish, a man becomes a complete pathic (κίναιδος τέλειος).

[118] Mauss, *General Theory*, 102. In the case of the latter, such things as the phase of the moon, the number of fingers used, and the amount of the substance used can affect magical power.

but such a stone can itself take on properties that vary in efficacy based on their original source. The same may be true of other minerals or stones although the magic associations may actually spring from purely physical resemblances or previously perceived connections now lost over time, as is frequently the case.[119] So while the connection between the powerful vision of the lynx and the efficacy of λυγγούριον is a helpful example, this particular relationship is limited in the sense that only the lynx itself "produces" the stones.[120] A much wider spectrum of associations, however, may be detected in the case of serpents and their role in the perceived causes of impotence, an affliction that was seen as a contagion associated with their poisonous bite. Based on a popular acceptance of this relationship, a close connection can be established which links serpents, their appearance, and their venom with substances or amulets deemed effective in the treatment of male sexual failure.

Several minerals and stones were said by the ancients to repel serpents or to cure their bites by virtue of their composition. For example, γαγάτης, jet, seems to have been a type of bituminous coal that Dioscorides claims repelled snakes and that was well known for its lustre, making it a popular material for use in jewelry.[121] Aelian (*NA* 9.20), echoing Aristotle and Nicander, describes a similar stone of Thracian origin that was reputed to repel serpents when burnt and that exhibited marvelous properties that defied the ordinary laws of nature.[122] Νάφθα, a combustible oil derived from rock, was reported to have been effective against snakebite, and Pliny associates its burning properties with the magic of Medea in burning her rivals.[123]

Minerals and stones were often used in healing activities as well. For these a common means of ingestion or external application involved crushing the stone into fine powder. Such pulverized stone was often used in antiquity for a variety of medical cures and magi-

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[119] For a careful overview of the various approaches to the efficacy of amulets and sympathetic magic, see Tavenner, *Studies in Magic,* 113-123.

[120] It should be noted, however, that numerous other substances and animals are associated with good eyesight, including the serpent as has been noted.

[121] *De mat. med.* 5.128: διώκει δὲ καὶ ἑρπετὰ θυμιαθείς ("Burned, it drives away even serpents"). Cf. Ps-Hippocrates ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΕΡΓΩΝ ΛΙΘΩΝ (*Explanation About Effective Stones*) 40, in *Les Lapidaires Grecs,* vol. 2 of *Les Lapidaires de l'Antiquité et du Moyen Age,* ed. F. Mély and C.-E. Ruelle (Paris: Leroux, 1898-1902), 189: Οὗτος καπνιζόμενος ἑρπετὰ διώκει ("This [stone] when used as a fumigant drives away serpents"). Berendes, *Des Pedanios Dioskurides,* 547, citing Pliny *NH* 36.34.141, identifies it with lignite. According to Alfred Jacob ("Lapides" DS, 3.2.936) it is jet.

[122] Aristotle, *De mir. ausc.* 841a31-33; Nicander, *Theriaka* 45 and the scholiast ad loc. According to Aelian the stone itself can burn: when fanned, the flames diminish; when doused with water, they increase.

[123] Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 1.73.2-3. Pliny *NH* 2.109.235.

cal purposes. For example, according to Pliny one pulverized stone, *memphites,* was smeared as a plaster on areas undergoing surgery in order to deaden pain.[124] Often the process of obtaining the necessary material included the scraping of architectural and sculptural artifacts to obtain a dust considered efficacious for one reason or another; in one important instance it was suggested that the penis of a statue be scraped, presumably to obtain powder to increase potency.[125] Clearly, the perceived power of the pulverized material in this case derived not from the inherent properties of whatever stone was used but rather from its alteration and the presumed transferable power of the visual representation of the male organ itself.

One stone, ἀχάτης (agate), may be singled out for additional scrutiny. The many varieties of this stone were often confused in ancient times; it is mentioned by Theophrastus and described by Pliny.[126] Along with its other curative properties, the ability of ἀχάτης to cure snakebite is attested in ancient lapidaries, most notably that attributed to Damigeron.[127] Like other mineral substances, it too could be pulverized, and in this form it was thought useful for treating serpent bites in a variety of different applications.[128] Such beliefs were of long duration, for the association of ἀχάτης with serpents is likewise reported by the medieval Marbode who claims that the Cretan variety of the stone was effective against poison in general and that it had the special ability to protect against viper's venom.[129] But it had

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[124] *NH* 36.11.56: *huius usus conteri et iis quae urenda sint aut secanda ex aceto inlini* ("The use of this is to be ground and smeared with vinegar on those [areas] which are to be burned or operated upon").

[125] See Daniel and Maltomini, *Supplementum Magicum* 2.236: 96.60-62 with commentary and references (248-249).

[126] Theophrastus, *De lapidibus* 31; Pliny, *NH* 37.54.139-141. To the ancient mind minerals were classed by appearance rather than by composition. Caley and Richards, *Theophrastus on Stones,* 128-129 (citing Blümner): "The ancient term was restricted to certain kinds of agate." Cf. Eichholz, *Theophrastus De lapidibus,* 109.

[127] Quoted in Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes,* 94: *et viperarum morsus curat* ("And it cures the bites of vipers"). Damigeron was a source for Marbode. For Marbode's sources and the debate about the original form and date of Damigeron's work, see 8-11.

[128] Socrates et Dionysius 39.5 in Robert Halleux and Jacques Schamp., *Les Lapidaires Grecs,* (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres, 1985), 172: Εὔθετος δὲ καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐχιοδήκτοις τρίβεις καὶ ἐπιπασθεὶς τῷ δήγματι ἢ καὶ μετὰ οἴνου ποτισθείς ("It is suitable when rubbed on viper bites and sprinkled over the bite or if drunk with wine"). Cf. Damigeron-Evax 17, (Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs,* 255): *Et viperarum morsus curat tritus et super vulnere aspersus et datus in potione.* The exact relationship of the texts is uncertain (331 nn. 1-4).

[129] Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes,* 37-38; *De lapidibus II, de achate* 63: *Iste nempe virus fugat, et quod vipera fundit.* Riddle's translation is unwieldy: "Without doubt the poison flees and because of this the snake runs away." Indeed, *fugare* is a transitive verb and *quod* should be here considered as a relative pronoun referring to the neuter *virus.* I suggest "Without doubt it [agate] drives poison away even [that] which the serpent pours out."

another important characteristic that it shared with other stones: it was considered a powerful agent in erotic matters.[130] In this regard ἀχάτης is exemplary in that it combines the concepts of an enhanced sexuality with protection from serpents. Additional evidence for this association comes from the epitome of the Ὀρφέως Λιθικά, known as the *Orphei Lithica Kerygmata*.[131]

> Ἐστὶ δὲ καὶ ἐρωτικός, ὥς φασιν, καὶ τίθησιν ἐπιθυμητοὺς ἄνδρας τε γυναιξὶ καὶ γυναῖκας ἀνδράσι περιαπτόμενος....
>
> It is of an erotic nature, as they say, and worn as an amulet, it puts men in a desirous mood for women and vice-versa...

But here too ἀχάτης is not alone in an association that connects erotic love with serpents; this intimate linking appears even more markedly with regard to another stone whose very name serves to associate it with the reptiles and their venom: ὀφίτης.

A well-known ornamental stone mentioned by several classical writers, ὀφίτης was a popular decorative building material.[132] According to Pliny it is included among marbles but has markings like those of a snake,[133] while in modern terminology it has been identified with serpentine.[134] Pliny's account is less than precise,

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[130] According to *Kyranides*, 1.2.20-26, for example, the stone βήρυλλος (beryl) enhanced the happiness and sex life of married couples when properly prepared and worn as an amulet: ποιεῖ δὲ καὶ εὔνοιαν εἰς τοὺς γαμοῦντας καὶ ὁμόνοιαν εἰς τὰ ἀνδρόγυνα ὡς λίαν κάλλιστον ("It makes for goodwill for those in marriage and a concord toward things common to both partners as very best as possible"). This stone was used in conjunction with other substances already acknowledged to have strong erotic associations. Thus a crow and lobster were carved on the stone, and savin (*Juniperus sabina*) was enclosed along with a bit of the crow's heart and the ἀφροδίτην τοῦ καράβου ("the sexual part of the crayfish"). See Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 22-23 nn. 6-9. For the probable identification see Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes*, 49-50: "This is the modern beryl...a quartz gem of silica with oxides of beryllium and other impurities."

[131] 21.7 (Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs*, 163-164). The dating of the epitome is admittedly late, even medieval.

[132] Lucan *BC* 9.714; Statius *Silvae* 1.5.35; Martial 6.42.15.

[133] *NH* 36.11.55: *differentia eorum ab ophite, cum sit illud serpentium maculis simile, unde et nomen accepit* ("[The types of marble] exhibit a difference from ophite since it is similar to the markings of serpents, and from there it gets its name"). Serpentine is here included with the so-called Augustan and Tiberian "marbles," whose very identification with actual marble has been questioned; they may in fact have been "coarse granites." Marble is metamorphosed limestone; granite, a crystalline igneous rock.

[134] Serpentine rock, presumably the source of the smaller individual stones, is originally of metamorphic origin and contains a variety of impurities, on which see Frederic B. Loomis, *Field Book of Common Rocks and Minerals*, rev. ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1948), 245-246. On the pure mineral see Frederick H. Pough, *A Field Guide to Rocks and Minerals*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 252: "Hydrous magnesium silicate (43.0% MgO, 44.1% SiO_2, 12.9% H_2O, plus some iron and possibly nickel)." Cf. Berendes, *Dioskurides Arzneimittellehre*, 552. As early as the 16th century Agricola had called ὀφίτης *serpentaria*. In Italy of the early 20th cen-

however, and ὀφίτης may also be identified with porphyry, a rock of igneous origin mentioned by Theophrastus.[135] The relatively small size of individual specimens, the stone's remarkable greenish coloration ("speckled with rectangular greenish-white crystals"),[136] and its curiosity value no doubt made it a likely candidate for amulets. Because of its coloration and mottled appearance, ὀφίτης was naturally associated with serpents and was considered an effective remedy for snakebite as well.[137] Its use, however, was not limited to remedying the venom of serpents, for it was also considered an antidote (ἀντιφάρμακον) effective against scorpion stings and, more importantly, as especially useful in promoting sexual activity.[138]

The perceived association of this stone with snakes is also well illustrated from passages in Pliny, Dioscorides, and others. For example, Pliny explains that of the three varieties he discusses, both the white and black varieties of serpentine are effective against snakebite when worn as amulets; in addition, there is an ashen-colored variety, known as *tephria,* which is especially efficacious in this regard.[139] The powerful influence of this ashen variety of ὀφίτης may be related in some way to its visual association with the ashes (τέφρα) of those plants that are reputed to act against serpents and their bites.[140] As a

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tury, stones like the *petra serpentina* were used against all venomous animals. See McCartney, "Verbal Homeopathy," 332-333. Again, as with other organisms or substances from the natural world, the determination of the exact modern equivalent is not absolutely neccessary for the present discussion.

[135] Theophrastus, *De lapidibus* 4.25. This vivid green porphyry, known as *verde antico,* originated in a limited region in Lacedaemon south of Sparta. See Eichholz, *Theophrastus De lapidibus,* 104. Cf. Pausanias 3.21.4.

[136] J. G. Frazer, *Pausanias' Description of Greece* (London: MacMillan, 1897; reprint, New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1965), 3.374.

[137] Generally in cases of so-called "mimetic sympathy," like has an effect on like as a remedy or cure: *similia similibus curantur.* On the "law of similarity" see Mauss, *General Theory,* 68; 70-71.

[138] Ps-Hippocrates, ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑ ΠΕΡΙ ΕΝΕΡΓΩΝ ΛΙΘΩΝ, 38 (Mély, *Les Lapidaires,* 189): καὶ πινόμενος ἀφροδίσια παρορμᾷ ("And taken in drink it excites sexual activity"). It also remedies headache (cf. Dioscorides, below), promotes sharpness of sight (ὀξυδερκίαν), and clears up difficulty in hearing (βαρυηκοΐαν).

[139] *NH* 36.9.56: *duo eius genera: molle candidi, nigricantis durum. dicuntur ambo capitis dolores sedare adalligati et serpentium ictus... contra serpentes autem a quibusdam praecipue laudatur ex iis quem tephrian appellant a colore cineris* ("Of it there are two kinds: the soft of white appearance; the hard, of black; both are said to allay headache and the bites of serpents... For use against serpents, however, from these [one kind] is especially praised by certain people which they call *tephria* from the color of ash").

[140] E.g., the ashes of the grapevine discussed above (146-147). Similarly, the ashes of other plants, like the wild cabbage (Cato's *brassica erratica*) may also be intended (*NH* 20.36.95): *radicum cinis...serpentium morsus sanat* ("The ash of its roots...cures the bites of serpents"). Relatedly, according to Pliny (*NH* 20.36.92) the cabbage is inimical to the growth of the vine and may represent the type of polarity of effect often encountered in the world of sympathetic influence; its roasted seeds were also considered helpful against serpents (*NH* 20.36.94).

result, Pliny's emphasis upon the efficacy of the ash-colored variety of ὀφίτης can serve as a good example of the perceptive process of interrelation by which the concept of συμπάθεια operates.

To return to the discussion of ὀφίτης, Dioscorides also specifies three varieties, each effective against snakebite (*De mat. med.* 5.143):

> λίθος ὀφίτης· ὁ μέν τίς ἐστι στιβαρός, μέλας, ὁ δὲ σποδοειδὴς τὴν χρόαν καὶ κατεστιγμένος, ὁ δέ τις γραμμάς ἔχων λευκάς. Πάντες δὲ εὐχρηστοῦσι περιαπτόμενοι ἐπὶ ἐχεοδήκτων καὶ ἐπὶ κεφαλγούντων.
>
> Ophite: some of it is tough and dark, some is ashen and speckled in color, and some has white stripes. Worn as amulets, all are good against viper bites and headache.

And, in what may be a reference to the effects of ὀφίτης on the lassitude associated with impotence, Dioscorides adds that the stone is a cure for listlessness.[141] Later medical writers follow the general assumptions of Dioscorides and Pliny. For example, Aetius, drawing on Galen, adds information about the stone's other effects and its reputed power against snakebite.[142] Literarily, according to Nonnos, another late source, the power of ὀφίτης is such that it was incorporated into advice given to Cadmus on how to avoid the wrath of Ares. In his account an emphasis on the fragrance of the stone (εὔοδμον ὀφίτην) recalls the fumigation of snakes by other substances (*Dionysiaca* 2.672-674):

> ἐννύχιος δὲ
> οὐρανίοιο Δράκοντος ἐναντίον ὄμμα τιτήνας
> ῥέξον ὑπὲρ βωμοῖο λαβὼν εὔοδμον ὀφίτην....
>
> and in the night
> Stretching your sight toward the celestial serpent,
> Make a sacrifice while grasping sweet-smelling ophite...

Of note in most of these cases is the emphasis placed on carrying the stone as an amulet (*ambo adalligati*, περιαπτόμενοι / περιαπτόμενον),[143] thereby transferring its power to the individual. There is a strong el-

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[141] *De mat. med.* 5.143: ὁ δὲ τὰς γραμμὰς ἔχων ἰδίως ἱστορεῖται ληθάργῳ ... βοηθεῖν ("The one having lines in particular is attested as helping lethargy").

[142] *Libri medicinales* 2.29: Ὀφίτης λίθος. Ὁ δὲ ὀφίτης καλούμενος λίθος καυθεὶς ῥυπτικῆς τε καὶ θρυπτικῆς γίγνεται δυνάμεως. πινόμενος δὲ μετ' οἴνου λευκοῦ καὶ λεπτοῦ τοὺς ἐν κύστει λίθους θρύπτει· ὠφελεῖ δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐχιοδήκτους περιαπτόμενος ("The ophite stone: the stone called *ophites* when burned has purgative and stone-breaking power. When drunk with mild white wine, it breaks the stones in the bladder; in addition when worn as an amulet, it helps those bitten by snakes"). It may well be the ancient perception that such problems with the bladder are related to those of impotence. See Aristotle *Problemata* 4.9.877b, where a full bladder causes difficulty in performing intercourse.

[143] In general see Gerhard Kropatschek, *De amuletorum apud antiquos usu capita duo* (Gryphia: Abel, 1907), 9-12 and especially 8. The Roman writers generally allude to

ement of curative magic evident, and ὀφίτης used as an amulet was widely recognized as being very powerful; in fact, it is one of only three stones or minerals included by Dioscorides because of their magical efficacy.[144]

Along with the popular belief in the magical power of stones came a reverential and protective affection for the stones themselves and for the objects with which they were associated. One very important source for such information is the fourth-century *Orphic Lithika* ('Ορφέως Λιθικά),[145] a dactylic poem of 774 lines drawing from Homeric traditions, the bulk of which is devoted to the wondrous curative and prophylactic properties ascribed to efficacious stones and to detailed instructions for their use. In most cases the magical properties of specific minerals are given additional significance by linking accounts of their use to mythological characters; chief among these are two figures closely associated with the tradition of the healing powers of stones, Philoctetes and Euphorbos.[146] In return for their beneficial powers, moreover, the stones themselves are revered as divinities and are attended accordingly. One stone deemed effective against serpents, σιδηρίτης (siderite), is washed, dressed, and coddled like an infant; shaken in the hands it emits the cry of a newborn, and with this voice it gives prophecy to those seeking information about the future.[147] In another example, a belief in the numerous curative powers of ἐχίτης, a stone also closely associated with serpents, causes it to be addressed in hymnic language and especially in the traditional way a divine genealogy was ordinarily recounted in such circumstances (346-47):

> Καὶ σέο, δαιμονίη, μεμνήσομαι αὐτίκα, πέτρη,
> αὐτοκασιγνήτη πολιῆς καὶ ὁμώνυμ' ἐχίδνης·
>
> And you, numinous stone, I shall presently call to mind;
> Sameborn sister and namesake of the hoary viper.

Especially important too is that the perceived relationship of the stone to the "hoary viper" is made quite clear, for it identifies ἐχίτης as being a sibling (αὐτοκασιγνήτη) of the reptile and consequently as

the wearing of amulets with verbs such as *alligare, adalligare*, and *suspendere*. See Tavenner, *Studies in Magic*, 79 nn. 75 and 76.

[144] The others are σεληνίτης (selenite or moonstone), like ὀφίτης used medically and magically, and ἴασπις (jasper) exclusively used as an amulet. Nevertheless, Dioscorides put little store in the actual effectiveness of amulets. See Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy*, 159.

[145] I refer to the text and commentary in Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs*.

[146] For the particulars see Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs*, 38-45.

[147] On the powers of σιδηρίτης, see *Orph. Lith.* 418-430; for its prophetic powers, 360-397.

sharing its very essence. What is also clearly acknowledged here, of course, is that it is the visible appearance of the stone which associates it with vipers, an identification reported by Pliny and Solinus.[148] In the following lines the ἐχίτης is praised as an effective remedy against snakebite; and according to one version of a familiar mythological account of miraculous healing, it enhanced the skills of Machaon in curing the festering wound of Philoctetes resulting from a snakebite (348-49):[149]

ἦ ῥά ποτ' εἰναετῆ λώβην ἀμενηνὸν ἔθηκας
ῥίμφα Φιλοκτήταο Μαχαονίης ὑπὸ τέχνης.
Οὐ μέν πως κείνην Ποιάντιος ἔλπετο θυμῷ
νοῦσον ὑπεκφεύξεσθαι ἀταρτηρήν, ποθέων περ·
ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἀλεξικάκοιο μαθὼν παρὰ πατρὸς ἀπωγήν,
λᾶαν, ὅτις κ' ἀκέοιτο, βαλὼν ἔπι φάρμακα μηρῷ,
σεῦεν ἐπὶ Τρώεσσιν 'Αλεξάνδροιο φονῆα·

Surely once the nine-year leprous infection of Philoctetes
You swiftly rendered harmless by means of Machaon's skill.
Not ever did the son of Poas (Philoctetes) expect in his heart
To escape the baneful sickness, yet wanting it very much.
But he (Machaon), having learned the techniques of aid
From the side of his ill-warding father, applying over the leg
The stone that might heal [the wound] as a curative,
He sent back against the Trojans the slayer of Alexander.

For its part the stone ὀφίτης is also held in especially high regard, since its association with serpents also makes it an infallible remedy against the viper and its bite (338-343):

Νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ἀτραπιτοῖο πολὺ πλέον ἄμμι λέλειπται,
σεῖο δ' ἔτι κραδίην κλονέει μέγα δέργμα δράκοντος,

[148] *NH* 37.72.187; Solinus 38. The name is derived from ἔχις and ἐχίδνη, both of which mean "viper." See Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs*, 310 n. 10. Riddle (*Marbode of Rennes*, 63) suggests, however, that the name *echites* derives from the Greek ἀετίτης, the eaglestone; but Marbode's text mentions only the former (360): *Inter praecipuos lapides numeratur echites* ("Among extraordinary stones *echites* is numbered"). The text itself makes no direct reference to serpents, however, and follows Marbode's source Damigeron (Riddle, *Marbode of Rennes*, 111). Cf. the account of Pliny (*NH* 36.39.149-151) concerning *aetites*. Nevertheless, Marbode's contention that the stone *echites* is sought out by the eagle and placed in its nest as protection (361-362: *quem petit extremis orbis Jovis ales ab horis / custodem nidi defensoremque futurum*) seems to me to suggest that it possessed serpent-repelling powers, the snake being a recognized threat to the unguarded eggs of birds in general.

[149] For an alternative story, that Philoctetes was cured by the use of Lemnian earth, and the suggestion that such substances drew out the poison, see W. R. Halliday, "Of Snake-Stones," in W. R. Halliday, *Folklore Studies Ancient and Modern* (London: Methuen, 1924), 137 with further references there. The account ought to be read with considerable caution, however, since Halliday fails to distinguish between the descriptions of ὀφίτης and ἐχίτης in the text of the 'Ορφέως Λιθικά and confuses their effects.

μάνθανε καὶ δολιχῶν ὄφεων μὴ δειδέμεν ἰούς·
τρῖψαι γὰρ λεπτὴν ὀφιήτιδα κέκλεο πέτρην
ἥν ποτέ τις κρατεροῖσι πεπαρμένος ἔλθῃ ὀδοῦσι,
καί μιν ἐφ' ἕλκεϊ πάσσε· καὶ ἀτρεκὲς ἔσσετ' ὄνειαρ.

Now since there remains for us much more of the path,
And the great sight of a serpent still upsets your heart,
Learn not to fear the venoms of long serpents:
For I bid you to finely pulverize the snake stone
When someone comes along bitten by powerful teeth,
And salve him upon the wound; it will be a certain help.

The stone also benefits those who respect it and who use it wisely since it can drive away serpents and possesses other powers to cure bodily ailments (463-68):[150]

Βουκολίδης Εὔφορβος ἀγαυοῦ φάσκεν ὀφίτου
φάρμακα μὴ μούνων ὄφεων κατένωπα δύνασθαι,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ὀφθαλμοῖσι φέρειν φάος ἠδὲ βαρεῖαν
ἐκ κεφαλῆς ἕλκειν ὀδύνην· ἤδη δέ τιν' ἀνδρῶν
οὔασι δηθύνοντα καθήρας ὤπασεν αἶψα
καὶ δὴ καὶ λεπτῆς ἐριήκοον ἔμμεν ἀϋτῆς.

Euphorbos son of Boukolos said of stately ophites
That not only it is it powerful against serpents alone,
But also that it bears light to the eyes
And draws from the head crushing pain.
And purging one man slow in hearing, it quickly granted
In addition that he be sharp in hearing even a faint cry.

Such passages stand as evidence of how the prophylactic and curative magic associated with ὀφίτης was thought to operate. And it becomes evident that in this case the stone, like ἐχίτης, is associated with the reptile because of its similarity to a serpent's variegated skin or because the streaks of ore in the rock matrix resemble snakes.[151]

But the power of ὀφίτης is not restricted in use only to protective and healing influence against serpents, for like the reptile itself, the stone was closely associated with matters of sexuality; and this is what makes it an especially worthwhile object of investigation. As I have shown in the case of serpents, such an association stemmed from the identification of the animal with the male reproductive organ, a general perception that originates in a similarity of the penis with other objects that display visual characteristics of thinness,

[150] Cf. 430-450; 342 ff.; 452. See also Pliny, *NH* 36.9.56 (cited above) and Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 5.143. For the genealogy of Euphorbus and his role in the poem, see Halleux and Schamp, *Lapidaires Grecs,* 38-43.

[151] Riddle, *Dioscorides on Pharmacy,* 161-162.

length, and cylindricality.[152] Thus, like the mottled variegation on the leaves and stem of the aroid plants examined earlier, the markings of ὀφίτης are reminiscent of similar markings on snakes. This sensible association suggested that there existed in the stone an innate serpentine quality; and consequently, with the belief that the penis and the stone shared a common intermediary in the serpent, a clear relationship between the two was established in the world of sympathetic magic and prophylactic amulets. Like the ability of ὀφίτης to repel serpents and to heal their bites, the special power to remedy male sexual dysfunction proceeded from the perceived association of the stone with the penis.

The stone and its power to overcome impotence appear in several places in ancient literature. One prominent example is again from the *Orphic Lithika*, where ὀφίτης is at the same time praised for its ability to repel serpents (469-473):

> Ἤδη καί τινα φῶτα χόλῳ χρυσέης Ἀφροδίτης
> ἔργα πρὸς ἱμερόεντα γάμων ἀμενηνὸν ἐόντα
> μεμνῆσθαι φιλότητος ἀκεσσάμενος προΐαλλεν.
> Ἐν πυρὶ δ' εἴ κε βάλῃς μιν, ὀδωδὴν ἑρπετὰ τοῖο
> φεύξεται, οὐδ' ἔτι πω μενέει σχεδόν, ουδ' ἐνὶ χειῇ.
>
> And [ophites] heals and returns to his sexuality
> Another man who was powerless to perform
> The amorous duties of marriage through the ire of golden Aphrodite.
> And if you cast it in a fire, serpents will flee its odor;
> Neither will they remain nearby, nor in their burrow.

This passage depicts the male as a helpless victim of divine anger, afflicted with impotence and separated from the obligations imparted by social convention. The vocabulary of the passage further emphasizes the sense of powerlessness affecting both personal and social spheres of human interaction. For example, while the use of the adjective ἀμενηνός implies physical ineffectiveness or lack of strength in many different contexts, its appearance here is clearly imbued with the concept of sexual powerlessness.[153] It is a condition of an individ-

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[152] In general, length and cylindricality associates the penis with visually similar objects or organs like a rope, a rod, a tail, and the like. See Skoda, *Médecine Ancienne,* 157, 170.

[153] LSJ s.v. ἀμενηνός. Its derivation from α privative and μένος is probable. Hesychius gives ἀδυνάμενος as its equivalent. The sexual overtones of the substantive μένος are evident from Archilochus, Pap. Colon. 7511.51-53 where male sperm is presumably meant:

> ἅπαν τ] ε̣ σῶμα καλὸν ἀμφαφώμενος
> λευκ] ὸν ἀφῆκα μένος
> ξανθῆς ἐπιψαύ [ων τριχός.

ual spited by the ire (χόλῳ) of Aphrodite, presumably the typical response of the goddess of sexuality to some unmentioned insult or irreverence.[154]

Similar assertions appear at *Orphei Lithica Kerygmata* 13:[155]

> Φασὶ δὲ καὶ τὸν ἀκίνητον πρὸς ἀφροδίσια καὶ ἠλίθιον ὑπὸ τούτου [λίθου] πρὸς κίνησιν καὶ ἐπιθυμίαν ἔρχεσθαι.
>
> And they say that even he who is not moved to sexuality and is unlearned [in this regard] by means of this stone comes to desire and intercourse.

The emphasis on sexuality is even more evident in this passage, however, for although it is simply a paraphrase of information from *Orph. Lith.* 461-473, the vocabulary further emphasizes the connection between the curative powers of ὀφίτης and its effect upon the impotent male by describing the affliction's effects with even more sexually explicit terms than its source. For example, the word ἀκίνητον derives from κινεῖν ("to move"), which is the euphemistic equivalent of βινεῖν ("to screw"), itself the proper Old Comedy word for performing sexual intercourse.[156] The same is true for κίνησις (literally, "the act of moving"), and the words emphasize both the association of the stone with the physical aspects of sexuality and those specific properties curative for male sexual dysfunction.

> And caressing all around her lovely body
> I released my white force,
> Lightly touching her tawny hair.

For the extension of the semantic range of μένος, see Gregory Nagy, *A Comparative Study of Greek and Indic Meters* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), 265-267. See also John Van Sickle, "Archilochus: A New Fragment of an Epode," *CJ* 71.1 (1975), 9, who proposes τοὐμ] ον μένος ("my force"). The doubts expressed by M. L. West ("The Epilogue of the Other Editor," *ZPE* 16 [1974], 217) about Merkelbach's supplement λευκ] ὸν....μένος are based on the appropriateness of whether Archilochus "could have used μένος" concretely in reference to male semen." Cf. R. Merkelbach and M. L. West, "Ein Archilochos-Papyrus," *ZPE* 14 (1974), 111. In addition—and this may be the result of literary expression in the poem—the word has epic resonances and associations with death and the shades in the Underworld, e.g., Hom. *Od.* 10.521: νεκύων ἀμενηνὰ κάρηνα ("powerless heads of dead folk").

[154] A close parallel may be seen in the so-called *ira Priapi* theme of the *Satyrica.*

[155] Halleux and Schamp, *Les Lapidaires Grecs,* 155-156.

[156] Henderson, *Maculate Muse,* 151-153. While primarily emphasizing the characteristics and vocabulary of obscenity in Old Comedy, Henderson cites other instances from classical literature as examples of how κινεῖν and its derivatives are specifically associated with sexual movements. The equivalence of βινεῖν and κινεῖν is treated in G. Pascucci, "ΚΙΝΗΤΙΑΝ," *Atene e Roma* n.s. 4 (1959), 102-105. For a more recent exploration and a careful examination of the βινῶ / κινῶ relationship, see David Bain, "Six Greek Verbs of Sexual Congress (Βινῶ, κινῶ, πυγίζω, ληκῶ, οἴφω, λαικάζω)," *CQ* 41.1 (1991), 63-67 where Henderson's assertion of verbal equivalency is contested. Additional information and references in David G.

Having taken into account the close association of certain stones with serpents' bites and their venom, I now conclude that any stone believed effective against serpent venom, in this particular case ὀφίτης, could at the same time be considered efficacious against impotence. Information of this type constituted credible and accepted lore passed along in a tradition of physical and verbal association, and what results from such associations is a complex of observable and functional properties that became part of the folkloric body of information closely associated with iatromagical traditions.[157] In light of these considerations and since the workings of amulets and witchcraft are closely entwined in the perceptual network, it becomes easy to understand how ὀφίτης was believed to function: possessed of a concentrated capability derived from its perceived sympathetic connections, it reacts against the contagion brought on by malign influence, βασκανία.[158]

Indeed, according to Aristotle the related word βασκάνιον means the amulet itself, and the corresponding *fascinum* of the Romans signifies both the operation of witchcraft and a representation of the phallus worn as an amulet to avert it.[159] Amulets of all kinds were considered extremely powerful; for example, one described in the *Kyranides* was able to ensure its wearer protection from physical and magical threats both day and night (1.7.20-21):

> ἀποστρέφει δὲ καὶ ἰνδαλμοὺς νυκτερινούς· ποιεῖ δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ λιθιῶντας. βασκανίαν δὲ πᾶσαν ἀποστρέφει.
>
> It turns away even visions at night and it works even for those suffering from stones. It averts all witchery.

Amulets, in addition, acted magically upon all kinds of poisons to nullify their physical effects.[160] And so it is with ὀφίτης. Because of its

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Martinez, *P. Michigan XVI: A Greek Love Charm from Egypt*, American Studies in Papyrology 30 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 58 n. 8.

[157] McCarthy ("Verbal Homeopathy," 332) cites the conflicting stories of the naming of ὀφίτης according to Pliny (see above, 161) and according to the ancient commentary on the Ὀρφέως Λιθικά.

[158] In modern Greek folklore protective amulets are known as βασκαντοῦρες. Important too is the fact that garlic is used to ward off the malign influence of the evil eye because of its caustic properties. Further details in Margaret M. Hardie, "The Evil Eye in Some Greek Villages of the Upper Haliakmon Valley in West Macedonia," in Dundes, *Evil Eye*, 107-123.

[159] Aristotle Fr. 592; LS s.v. *fascinum*, II A. See also Johns, *Sex or Symbol*, 62-73 with figs. 45 and 56. The English word "fascinate," moreover has a particular association with the power of serpents to transfix their victims. See Mundkur, *Cult of the Serpent*, 1 and 8.

[160] See Kropatschek, *De amuletorum*, 15: *Aliud phylacterium omnia animalia mortifera vel venenata depellit* ("Another amulet drives off all deadly or poisonous animals").

visual association with serpents and because of its perceived ability to repel them and to negate the effects of their poison, the stone was thought to cure male sexual dysfunction; and since impotence was seen as a result of a contagion that affects the male organ, the magical properties of ὀφίτης, deriving as well from its association with serpents, were considered efficacious in guarding against it.

Since the empowerment afforded the users of magically charged objects may be derived from a manipulation of their inherent power, such an enablement depends on the ways specific substances are directed and how the application of such forces offsets other magical influences. For the most part, the use of amulets constituted a prophylactic application of magical properties. Yet a more active principle of use may also be seen in the way the inherent magic of substances could be directed at individuals to alter their perceptions or to affect their relationship with the possesser of the amulet.[161] In this regard ancient magical texts afford a striking example of the way stones with sexual associations were altered and used; and in one important instance these uses extend to *causing* sexual dysfunction in males, quite the opposite of the purely protective effects of ὀφίτης.[162] The result is that in the realm of human affairs and through the direct alteration of objects or substances by human agency, the ability to wield powerful sympathetic influences can enable those traditionally disempowered in both personal interaction and in societally-sanctioned relationships to gain control over others.

The stone ὀψιανός (obsidian, a glasslike igneous rock) serves as a good example of this aspect of sympathetic influence since it shares with ὀφίτης an association with serpents and with human sexuality.[163] According to the *Kyranides* the stone was incorporated into the κεστὸς ἱμάς of Aphrodite, an object of apparel the exact function and appearance of which has prompted considerable debate but which has also had a long literary pedigree; in this case it is a headband or diadem.[164] In and of itself the stone was in demand (1.10.18-22):

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[161] Christoper Faraone, "Aphrodite's ΚΕΣΤΟΣ and Apples for Atalanta: Aphrodisiacs in Early Greek Myth and Ritual," *Phoenix* 43.3 (1990), 225.

[162] Artificial alteration of amulets falls into a number of categories, one of the most important being the inscription of the objects to enhance the power of the original substance. See Barbara Freire-Marreco, "Charms and Amulets (Introductory and Primitive)," in *ERE* 3.397. Cf. n. 111 above.

[163] See Theophrastus *De lapidibus* 14 (ὁ Λιπαραῖος [λίθος]) and commentary in Caley and Richards, *Theophrastus on Stones*, 83. Cf. Pliny *NH* 36.67.196-198.

[164] Among other interpretations, the κεστός has been identified as a saltire, the crossing straps seen on representations of Near Eastern goddesses, by Campbell Bonner, "ΚΕΣΤΟΣ ΙΜΑΣ and the Saltire of Aphrodite," *AJP* 70.1 (1948), 1-6 and as a kind of magical veil by Onians, *Origins*, 368-369. See the discussions in Faraone,

Ὁ δὲ κιναίδιος λίθος εὔγνωστος ὢν ⟨ὅμ⟩ως δύσγνωστος ὑπάρχει, ὃς καλεῖται ὀψιανός. ἐστὶ δὲ Κρόνου. οὗτος ὁ λίθος ἐστὶ δισσός. ὁ μὲν γάρ ἐστι σκοτεινὸς καὶ μέλας, ὁ δὲ μέλας μέν, διαυγὴς δὲ ὥσπερ τὰ κάτοπτρα. οὗτος ἐστιν ὃν ζητοῦσιν πολλοί, καὶ οὐ γινώσκουσιν αὐτόν. οὗτος γάρ ἐστι δρακόντιος λίθος.

The kinaidios stone being well known is yet hard to recognize [and is the one] which is called obsidian. It is the stone of Kronos. This stone is of dual character. The one kind is dusky and black and the other is black and translucent like mirrors. This is the stone that many seek out, and they do not recognize it. For it is the stone of serpents.

More importantly, its description as a δρακόντιος λίθος ("serpent stone") indicates that it had a connection with sexuality. Indeed, it is likewise reputed both to deter and to promote sexual activity, most notably passive homosexual relations, for which reasons it is referred to as the κιναίδιος λίθος.[165]

As a result, the amulet fashioned from ὀψιανός contributed substantially to the sympathetic power that the κεστός of Aphrodite could bring to bear on those against whom its influence was directed.[166] The description of the diadem itself demonstrates the range of this influence (1.10.50-52):

[ὁ κεστός] ὁ δεινότατος καὶ μεταλλάσσων τὰς φύσεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ πάντων ζῴων, ὁμοίως καὶ τὰς γνώμας ἀρρενικῶν, μάλιστα δὲ ἀνθρώπων ὥστε μαλθακίζεσθαι καὶ ἀπογυναικοῦσθαι τὸν ἀψάμενον ἢ φορέσαντα.

[The kestos] is mighty even in changing the natures of men and of all living things; and similarly the leanings of males and especially of men, so that he who touches or wears it becomes effeminized and softened.

"Aphrodite's ΚΕΣΤΟΣ," 220-222 and in his "Sex and Power: Male-Targetting Aphrodisiacs in the Greek Magical Tradition," *Helios* 19.1-2 (1992), 101 n. 3 where he refers to the object as a "'charm' carried loosely in the folds of Aphrodite's clothing." Two different objects are described as the κεστός in *Kyranides* 1.10.49-100. For an extensive and useful treatment of the text, including a comprehensive discussion of the individual elements involved and further references, see Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 195-221. The κεστός figures in epic both early and late: Hom. *Il.* 14.214-221; Nonnos, *Dionysiaca* 32.5-31.

[165] The adjective is applied to other materials incorporated into amulets. There are four items in each of the alphabetically arranged chapters of the first book of *Kyranides*. In this case since the chapter "kappa" (10) treats amulet materials beginning with that letter, the descriptive adjective κιναίδιος is used to describe the plant, the fish, the bird, *and* the stone, linking them all in some way with sexuality. See Mély, *Les Lapidaires*, lxiii for a description of this *litteromancie* and the necessity of inventing words and formulating periphrases to fit the alphabetical schema.

[166] Other materials from which the strap of the κεστός was made included the stomach of a hawk, a bird that according to Aelian (*NA* 2.43) was prone to sexual pursuit. Other objects contributed to the heightened sexually charged influence: the

So powerful is this influence over all of nature, then, that a mere touch of the strap of the κεστὸς ἱμάς can render a man less masculine.[167] But this is not all, for the sexual power of the obsidian amulet hidden in the κεστὸς ἱμάς causes more serious changes in virility (1.10.64-65):

> ἐὰν οὖν τις ἅψηται ἄρρην τοῦ ἱμάντος, οὐκ ὀρθιάσει· ἐὰν δὲ ἀγνώστως φορέσῃ, μαλακισθήσεται.
>
> Whenever therefore some male touches the strap, he will not get an erection; and if he carries it without knowing it, he will be made effeminate.

Finally, the sympathetic influence is so great that the diadem itself does not even require physical contact to work its wonders (1.10.57-58):

> ἐὰν δὲ γυνὴ φορηέσῃ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦτον, οὐδεὶς αὐτῇ συνελεύσεται ἐν συνουσίᾳ· οὐ γὰρ ὀρθιάσει ὁ ἀνήρ.
>
> And if a woman wears this strap, no one will come to her in intercourse, for a man will not get an erection.

Like various other alterations to substances used as amulets (and as is especially often the case with stones) any imagery carved into one side of the obsidian contributes to its power to cause physical failure. Thus the engraved image should represent a figure whose appearance would naturally be associated with male sexual dysfunction (1.10.53-55):

> Ἔτι δὲ εἰς τὸν ὀψιανὸν λίθον γλύψον ἄνθρωπον ἀπόκοπον, ἔχοντα παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τὰ αἰδοῖα κείμενα, τὰς δὲ χεῖρας κάτω ἐσταλμένας, αὐτὸν δὲ κάτω βλέποντα τοῖς αἰδοίοις.
>
> And so carve on the obsidian stone a castrated man, having his genitals lying at his feet, hands arranged downward, and looking down to his private parts.

The magical impact of such an amulet becomes especially clear when the presence of divine influence contributes to its efficacy. For example, the male figure carved onto the stone suggests the castration of Ouranos by Kronos, an association accompanied by the con-

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stone from the eye of a fish, the root of the ἱερά βοτάνη sacred to Aphrodite, and the wing tip of the ἴυγξ. See Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 200, 202-203.

[167] The verb μαλακίζω denotes effeminacy or unmanliness, the same sense indicated by the adjective μαλθακός. See Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 79 and Maud W. Gleason, "The Semiotics of Gender: Physiognomy and Self-Fashioning in the Second Century C.E.," in Halperin, Winkler, and Zeitlin, *Before Sexuality*, 397 where the discussion centers on the concept of the *cinaedus*.

cept of deathlike coldness.[168] On the reverse of the obsidian amulet, fittingly enough, Aphrodite herself appears (1.10. 55-57):[169]

> ὀπίσω δὲ πρὸς νῶτον Ἀφροδίτην, νῶτα πρὸς νῶτον ἔχουσαν, αὐτὴν δὲ ἑαυτὴν στρέφουσαν τὴν ὄψιν καὶ βλέπουσαν αὐτόν.
>
> And behind his back [carve] Aphrodite, holding her back to his back and turning her vision looking at him.

Since the goddess's image on carved stones in general is strong evidence of the capacity of a stone to affect human sexuality,[170] her iconographic presence on the amulet, further enhances the innate power of the stone. Thus the intentional alteration of a stone with images drawn from the human experience and from representations originating in mythological or divine constructs are able to reinforce the basic properties operative in the curative magic of a stone or amulet. In the case of the obsidian amulet, both factors contribute to its effectiveness as a magical source of weakened virility.

Another important facet of the magical transference of influence seen in the use of the obsidian amulet is the way it relies on the opposition of forces as well as on the similarity of properties for its effect. While ὀψιανός shares with ὀφίτης the associations with serpents and sexuality, there is a marked difference: in the κεστὸς ἱμάς the sympathetic power exercised by its various elements, especially ὀψιανός, is the opposite of that of ὀφίτης.[171] The delimitation and direction of power come into play here as well, and one indication of

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[168] For the close identification of Saturn/Kronos with coldness and death in magic charms and documents in general, see Martinez, *P. Michigan XVI*, 4-5. See also Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 201-202, where, however, I feel that the commentator (in her own words) "goes a bit too far" in her conclusions about the astrological implications of the identification.

[169] Aphrodite's importance is obvious, of course, and is reinforced by the statement that a rootlet of her sacred plant (ῥίζιον τῆς βοτάνης) could be used as a substitute for the fish stone (λίθος κιναιδίου ἰχθύος) in making up the diadem.

[170] In terms of visual representations, Aphrodite's association with another stone, σάπφειρος, is worth mentioning here as well. According to *Kyranides* 1.18.8 σάπφειρος was the stone of Aphrodite herself: ἀνῆκεν τῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ. Combined with other substances, it can cause an erection, especially for the elderly or those who want to copulate numerous times (*Kyranides* 1.18.58-59): μάλιστα τὴν ἔντασιν παρέχει τοῖς ἤδη γηρῶσιν τοῖς τε θέλουσιν πολλὰ συνουσιάζειν. Despite the similarity of name, however, this stone ought not be identified with our modern sapphire but rather with *lapis lazuli*, a stone on which the image of the goddess was often represented. Discussion in Waegeman, *Amulet and Alphabet*, 81 and n. 13 with references. See also Caley and Richards, *Theophrastus on Stones*, 83 where the suitability of *lapis lazuli* for engraving is disputed and it is suggested that the stone was primarily used "as a plain ornamental stone." See also 126-127 for their comments on κύανος, another variety of *lapis lazuli*.

[171] A similar opposition of power in the same object can be seen in the case of the plant εὔζομον (*Eruca sativa*) which both promotes and deters sexual prowess. For this

this is the fact that it is the interpersonal interests of a woman which are served by magical application of the object. Indeed, despite the close involvement of sexuality with the constituent elements of the magically charged substances, the application of this magic is essentially about individual control.[172] Thus these features evidence an individualization of the power of the amulet as an important function of its use. This combined aspect of the use of the κεστός ἱμάς demonstrates an important facet of the whole sphere of sympathetic magic and its use as an empowering concept, a kind of conceptual polarity inherent in a rationally based perception of magic-producing objects or substances.

Let me summarize the important points about this polarity. According to this perception of the world, objects or substances related in composition or appearance or simply perceived to be so may partake of differing sympathetic influences. What determines the actual and final result of the combination of substances or objects is dependent upon preparation and actual use of, say, a magically charged amulet and its combinations with other efficacious substances or objects similar or dissimilar in source or composition. Such belief in the power of magic as it resides in stones and amulets represents the intervention of human intellect with a more basic reliance on the magical correspondences among the material elements in the sympathetic chain. This intervention often takes the form of alteration. As a result of such an alteration of those objects from which sympathetic influence emanated and as result of the refinement in the way it can be directed, those gross and ill-defined perceptions felt to exist in the realm of plants and animals and their interrelation with the male organ were brought to a more rarefied yet more defined level of efficacy. Thus, the essences of the vegetable and animal world (οὐσία, δύναμις, φύσις) that led to applications of their iatromagical benefits became freed from restrictions imposed by the unwieldiness of collection and preparation. In the realm of stones and amulets these iatromagical influences then become purely associative; they are no longer bound to specific material elements with specific properties. Springing, rather, from the human intellect and reflective of the mental processes that distill the thematic from the particular, the associative aspects of the visual and the tactile are transferred to minerals and amulet stones.

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and other examples, see John J. Winkler, "The Constraints of Eros"; Faraone and Obbink, *Magika Hiera,* 221 and nn. 37-41.

[172] Faraone, "Male-Targetting Aphrodisiacs," 95.

Moreover, the relationship thought to exist among the various plants, animals, and minerals examined above (in addition to those many relationships once perceived to exist but as yet undiscovered) combined with their impact on, in this case, human sexuality serves to illustrate another conceptual framework. This framework extends from a basic and natural approach to sexual stimulation and dysfunction through an interaction with the social, magical, and divine constructs of the human intellect. In fact, viewed as a progressive development from the primitive to the culturally refined, the network I have outlined over these two chapters, spanning the vegetable, animal, and finally the mineral kingdoms and linked to the attendant application of transferred sympathetic magic, may serve as a representation of the kind of intellectual progression associated with the way the realities of infection, affliction, and cure were viewed. In the next chapter I investigate where and how this paradigm for viewing the world of sympathetic influences surfaces and how the operations of this belief system reflect and reinforce the operations of various ancient literary artifacts in their treatment of male sexual dysfunction.

CHAPTER FIVE

ΣΥΜΠΑΘΕΙΑ: RECOGNITION AND REJECTION

In the last two chapters I have described the essentials of a culturally pervasive and temporally persistent way of thinking that metaphorically and sympathetically linked certain natural objects and substances with male sexuality. At times indeterminate in extent and elusive in identification, once unearthed, the reconstructed evidence provides valuable insights into how a tradition of associative analogy led to reliance on a belief system that enabled the populace to procure or produce a variety of remedies for male sexual dysfunction and how the means to apply such influence was more or less conveniently obtainable by the population at large. The methods for doing so most often consisted of dietary regimens and salves of plant or animal origin; included as well were the more psychically oriented remedies derived from contact with the perceived magical powers of animal organs and artificially altered amulets. What is more, the possession of such power afforded its manipulators a ready access to the curative powers inherent in these objects and substances and thereby became the means to override the impact of male sexual dysfunction, the perceived causes of which were often closely associated with the supernatural.

In this final chapter I show how the operations of this belief system underlie the approach of various ancient literary artifacts to their depiction of male sexual dysfunction and how the literary representation of impotence in the prose fiction of the *Satyrica* differs from that of other genres in its portrayal of the victim of impotence. In doing so I demonstrate how a conceptual framework, deriving from a reliance upon the natural and magical remedies for male sexual dysfunction, forms the thematic basis of the work at a primary level. It is in first acting upon the premises of this conceptual framework that the main character seeks to remedy his impotence and to reintegrate himself personally and societally into the fictionalized world of the work. More importantly, in describing a process that echoes the intellectual progression from overt reliance on the iatromagical remedies themselves to the associative magic implied by the use of amulets and the empowerment they afford, I show how the text of the *Satyrica* negates the failure of the numerous impotence remedies recounted by Encolpius. It accomplishes this by emphasiz-

ing the first-person narrative of its impotent hero and by affording him a reflective literary voice. As a result of this process, the *Satyrica* supersedes previous literary representations of male sexual dysfunction.

As I demonstrated in Chapter One, the literary treatment of impotence finds itself most frequently imbedded in works of less exalted and even parodic status, that is, in works whose content comprises popular concepts and a corresponding level of discourse. Such works are generically suited to expressing this type of discourse in which personal matters like impotence function as an integral feature of their thematic landscape. Perhaps the best example of these is Catullus *c.* 67, which is intentionally simple in its design and whose diction is that of everyday speech.[1] The poem itself represents an imaginary dialogue between an unidentified human interlocutor and the personified door of a house in Verona; the content of the exchange is the history of the house and personal information about its former inhabitants.[2] While the actual conversation may be seen as an unusual and radical variation of the poetic genre of the *paraclausithyron,* typically the forlorn plaint of a lover to the housedoor of his beloved, the careful characterization of the door itself essentially transforms its responses into a rhetorical *apologia* against slanderous accusations although the defense itself is of a markedly gossipy nature.[3] Nevertheless, the poem shares with the *paraclausithyron* an incorporation into the literary landscape of a socio-cultural level of discourse marked by colloquial expression and popular sexual innuendo.[4] These elements are evident from the outset as the inter-

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[1] E. Badian, "The Case of the Door's Marriage (Catullus 67)," *HSCP* 84 (1980), 84. Problems of interpretation and manuscript readings are treated in Kenneth Quinn, *Catullus: The Poems,* 2nd ed. (London: MacMillan, 1973), 368-373. See also F. O. Copley, "The 'Riddle' of Catullus 67," *TAPA* 80 (1949), 245-253.

[2] See L. Richardson, Jr., "Catullus 67: Interpretation and Form," *AJP* 88 (1967), 423: "In 67 the principal voice is that of the housedoor, called upon to defend itself; the other voice, or voices, are secondary and lack clear personality." The exact identity of the interlocutor has been the subject of considerable debate. Richardson makes the case (424) that the interlocutor is female, possibly the new mistress of the house, a contention solidly dismissed by Badian ("Door's Marriage," 81 n. 3).

[3] Colin Macleod, "The Artistry of Catullus 67," in δεσμὸς κοινωνίας: *Scritti di Filologia et Filosofia,* ed. Gianfranco Fabiano and Enrica Salvaneschi (Genoa: Il Melangolo, 1981), 74-75. In addition to its portrayal as a slave prone to rumor-mongering (Badian, "Door's Marriage," 82), the door itself has been characterized as having a feminine voice whose responses constitute a defense of Roman womanly virtue. See Judith P. Hallett, "*Ianua iucunda*: The Characterization of the Door in Catullus 67," in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History,* ed. Carl Deroux, vol. 2 (Brussels, Collection Latomus, 1980), 106-122.

[4] Richardson ("Catullus 67," 424-425) systematically rejects the identification of

locutor, after greeting the door (as yet unidentified as such) formally and wishing it well (1-2), addresses it directly and prompts it to respond to current stories of its past and its rumored failure to guard the virtue of the one-time lady of the house (3-7):[5]

ianua, quam Balbo dicunt servisse benigne
olim, cum sedes ipse senex tenuit,
quamque ferunt rursus nato servisse maligne,
postquam es porrecto facta marita sene:
dic agedum nobis, quare mutata feraris
in dominum veterem deseruisse fidem.

Door, whom they say once served Balbus well
When he himself as an old man held these premises
And whom they say served the son poorly,
After you became a door for marrieds, the old man dead,
Tell me now why you are said to have abandoned
Your long-held loyalty to the master of the house.

Each of the three verbs of reported speech (*dicunt, ferunt, feraris*), two of which specify no particular subject while a third is passive, serves to emphasize the hearsay nature of the information circulating about the door and about its supposed complicity in the questionable happenings at the very house it was expected to protect.[6]

The door's initial response is simply to declare its innocence in the face of the charges of guilt leveled against it in the local gossip (9-10), again emphasized by a passive voice verb,[7] and to claim that its efforts were useless in view of the behavior of the young matron (11-13). Nevertheless, popular opinion stood hard against it.[8] In the ensuing exchange (15-18), however, after the interlocutor persists in gaining more information, the door becomes reluctant to comply and seeks to deflect any further conversation.[9] It does continue its defense, however, by resorting to explanations which themselves depend on popularly circulated small talk. It is at this point that the

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this poem as a *paraclausithyron*, the latter a common genre in Latin amatory poetry and particularly in elegy. Cf. the role of the *ianua* in Horace *c.* 1.25, Ovid's plea to the doorkeeper in *Amores* 1.6 and the door's plaint in Propertius 1.16, which Badian ("Door's Marriage," 85 n. 85) considers a direct imitation of Catullus 67.

[5] I follow the text of Werner Eisenhut, ed., *Catulli Veronensis Liber* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1983).

[6] According to Macleod ("Artistry of Catullus," 79) these verbs also indicate that the poem is modeled upon Hellenistic historical and mythological narrative as well.

[7] 67.9-10: *Non...culpa meast, quamquam dicitur esse mea* ("It's not my fault although it's said to be").

[8] 67.14: *Ad me omnes clamant: ianua culpa tuast* ("Everyone shouts at me: 'Door, it's your fault!'").

[9] 67.17: *qui possum? nemo quaerit nec scire laborat* ("Who can say? Nobody's looking for answers or is aching to know").

door carefully recounts the scandalous affairs of the young wife, one of which is rumored to have been the result of her husband's sexual inabilities. Significantly, while the woman's background and behavior are referred to only obliquely, the spouse's affliction is described in both metaphorical and direct terms (67.19-22):

primum igitur, virgo quod fertur tradita nobis,
  falsum est. non illam vir prior attigerat,
languidior tenera cui pendens sicula beta
  numquam se mediam sustulit ad tunicam;

First off, then, the story's not true
  That she was handed over to us still a virgin.
Her first husband hadn't laid a hand on her—
  His hanging little sticker was limper than wilted beet greens
And never even poked itself halfway up his tunic.

Again, certain elements important to this investigation stand out in this passage. First, the general tone of gossip and popular speculation is maintained by the verb of reported speech (*fertur*), as might be expected considering the subject matter. Likewise, in one especially apt line (21) stand two lowly sexual metaphors that coalesce in the description of the husband's impotence.[10] The one (*sicula*) is a Catullan coinage appearing only here, representative of the aggressive nature of the male sexual psyche and reminiscent of metaphors of weaponry found in other sexually oriented contexts of similar generic pedigree.[11] The other metaphor (*tenera beta*) is drawn from the plant world and compares the husband's limp penis to an immature beet root,[12] to the softness of the root itself[13] or, as is also likely, to the wilted leaves and stalk of the plant, familiar to the ancients as edible

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[10] Hallett ("Characterization of the Door," 118 and n. 43), arguing for the characterization of the door as a well-bred woman, contends that the diction of the poem consists of the kind of euphemism and circumlocution of one who is uneasy about directly describing sexual matters.

[11] For example, in *CP* 43 the word *hasta* ("spear") is used of Priapus's organ. For the Catullan use of coarse everyday language, see Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 220.

[12] Robinson Ellis, *A Commentary on Catullus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), 392. Ellis cites Horace *Serm.* 1.3.116: *teneros caules.*

[13] Note similar language deriving from familiar vegetable imagery in *AP* 11.29 (Automedon) where the first person narrator also reflects upon the social stigma of impotence voiced by unspecified critics:

Πέμπε, κάλει· πάντ' ἐστὶν ἕτοιμά σοι. ἦν δέ τις ἔλθει,
  τί πρήξεις; σαυτῷ δὸς λόγον, Αὐτόμεδον.
αὕτη γὰρ λαχάνου σισαρωτέρη, ἡ πρὶν ἀκαμπὴς
  ζῶσα, νεκρὰ μηρῶν πᾶσα δέδυκεν ἔσω.
πόλλ' ἐπὶ σοὶ γελάσουσιν, ἀνάρμενος ἂν παραβάλλῃ
  πλώειν, τὴν κώπην μηκέτ' ἔχων ἐρέτης.

greens.[14] The incorporation of this metaphor into the door's account is also indicative of the social level of discourse in the poem, since the beet was traditionally a food associated with the lower classes.[15] In a wider associative sense, moreover, the beet itself can be linked with the penis and with male sexual dysfunction in other ways as well, for according to Pliny the root of either the white or black variety is protective against the bites of serpents.[16] These two familiar images, then, combine to highlight the inherent clash between the concept of an aggressive virility and the cultural disrepute accorded a sexually dysfunctional male unable to defend himself from mockery by displaying any visible physical manifestations of his manliness (22).[17]

Yet the metaphors do not alone affirm the existence of popular tensions related to male sexuality. In the following lines the door introduces other social considerations about the situation while at the same time reinforcing a tenor of disapprobation (23-28):

sed pater illius gnati violassse cubile
  dicitur et miseram conscelerasse domum,
sive quod impia mens caeco flagrabat amore,
  seu quod iners sterili semine natus erat,
ut quaerendus...†...foret nervosius illud,
  quod posset zonam solvere virgineam.

But this son's father is said to have violated the bedroom
  And to have befouled the unfortunate house,
Either because his unholy mind was aflame with blind love

Send for her. Call to her. All is set for you. If she shows up, though,
  What do you intend to do? Give it a thought, Automedon.
Your thing, once alive and rigid, is parsnip-limper than a garden herb
  And has sunk completely dead between your legs.
Should you risk sailing, there will be much jeering at you,
  An oarsman no longer having an oar.

[14] Cf. Suet. *Aug.* 87.2, where Augustus is reported to have used *betizare* ("to become a beet") for *languere* ("to be impotent"), its popular equivalent (derived from λάχανον) being *lachanizare* ("to become vegetable greens"). See also Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 26. Theophrastus (*HP* 1.7.7; 1.10.4) describes both the root of the beet (*Beta vulgaris*) and its leaves as "fleshy" (σαρκώδης). While the tops were regularly eaten as a salad plant, the root seems to have been used primarily as a source of medicinal agents. See Pliny *NH* 19.40.132-135 and 20.27.69-71; cf. also Columella *De re rustica* 10.254 and 326.

[15] André, *L'Alimentation*, 31 with references.

[16] *NH* 20.27.69: *et madefacta suspensa funiculo contra serpentium morsus efficax esse dicitur* ("And dampened and hung from a line, it is said to be effective against serpent bites").

[17] The obvious indication of male prowess is mentioned in Catullus 32.10-11 and echoes its verbal imagery: *satur supinus / pertundo tunicamque palliumque* ("I lie here satisfied [from my meal] and I am poking right through my shirt and my cloak"). Cf. the similar condition of the Spartan at Ar. *Lys.* 984-996.

Or because the son was born a sexual slug with worthless seed
And had to seek out how that thing could get a little stiffer
Which might remove maidenly clothing.

Here, like its earlier appearance (10) and as the equivalent of the passive *fertur* (19), the verb *dicitur* emphasizes the unattributable source and the gossipy tone of the information. In reporting that it was the father of the groom who consummated, as it were, his son's marriage, the verb presents two alternative explanations for the deed; and, in contrast to the certainty expressed earlier, the alternatives now cast some doubt about the actual circumstances of the situation in a way exemplary of the unprovable nature of the information.[18] The diction of these intimations, moreover, like the humble metaphors proferred by the door earlier, reflects content and language found in other literary contexts at a similar generic level.[19]

Yet other factors significant for interpreting the social and cultural attitudes toward impotence are evident in the door's responses as well. For example, the rumored involvement of the groom's father with the bride, representing a reversal of the social norm, is depicted with a marked disapproval (*violasse, conscelerasse*). This attitude derives, in part at least, from a negative view of the sexual abilities of the older male,[20] evidence for which may be seen in Juvenal's mocking description of the sexual frustrations of old age (*Sat.* 10.204-209):

nam coitus iam longa oblivio, vel si
coneris, iacet exiguus cum ramice nervus
et, quamvis tota palpetur nocte, iacebit.
anne aliquid sperare potest haec inguinis aegri
canities? quid quod merito suspecta libido est
quae venerem adfectat sine viribus?

For intercourse is already long distant in memory;
Or should you try, your tool lies small and vessel-swollen.
And although it be stroked all through the night,

[18] Wilhelm Kroll, ed., *C. Valerius Catullus*, 6th ed. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1980), 216.

[19] Cf. Horace *Epodes*. 8.17; 12.17, 19.

[20] The usual portrayal of the older man in similar generic landscapes suggests that he yearns for the return of his sexual prowess; note, e.g., Ar. *Lys.* 598, where the magistrate claims that sexual experiences can be had despite one's age: ἀλλ' ὅστις ἔτι στῦσαι δυνατός ("but whoever is still capable of getting it up"). Cf. also *Lys.* 666-67. Martial's remedy for the impotence brought on by the aging process is particularly apt in this investigation (*Ep.* 13.34), on which see above Chapter Three, 108. For other literary examples see Stephen Bertman, "The Ashes and the Flame: Passion and Aging in Classical Poetry," in *Old Age in Greek and Latin Literature*, ed. Thomas M. Falkner and Judith de Luce (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 157-171. The philosophic approach to such endeavors later in life is, of course, considerably different and is explained by Cephalus in Plato *Rep.* 329 a-d: old age renders one free from a controlling physical master and enables one to enjoy peace and contentment.

It will still lie unresponsive.
So can this old age of debilitated loins hope for anything?
And isn't desire without ability,
Which actually impairs passion, truly suspect?

While Juvenal's depiction of the problem partakes of the abusive nature of the genre and is countered by other ancient evidence,[21] the Catullan poem does emphasize that the impotent groom has suffered not only the public shame of being cuckolded but also the added opprobrium of being bested sexually by an older man. Thus, at the mercy of hearsay during the incident and without opportunity for defense in his own words to the door's suggestions of impropriety after the fact, the sexually debilitated groom is portrayed as enduring the cultural and social stigma of his misfortunes in silence. The explanations offered by the voluble door of Catullus *c.* 67, then, offer one model for the way that the themes and commonplace images associated with impotence, surfacing in literary contexts, can both reveal the outlines of a substratum of popular belief and expression and reflect concomitant social attitudes toward the victim.

In other Latin poetry a juxtaposition of imagery extracted both from the quarry of literary myth and from the visual vein of metaphorical association makes it possible to identify even more precisely the evidence for the sympathetic and visual network of associations which I have been outlining. Horace's *Epode* 3 is a fine example of how these elements emerge in the sustained development of a single literary artifact. The piece is a half-serious Archilochean denunciation of the agonizing results of eating garlic, which deftly incorporates literary, mythological, and magical allusions into its thematic framework and then concludes with a wink-and-nod witticism directed at Maecenas. In the poem the interplay of magic and sexuality functions as a humorous subtext and draws upon popular associations of garlic with heat, poison, and venomous feminine enchantment. More importantly, however, in the humorous imagery of its finale it reflects those popular visually derived perceptions that envisioned the garlic plant itself as the cause for a rampantly physical male sexuality.[22] Consequently, while the jocular and parodic char-

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[21] See Wieslaw Suder, "Old Age and Eros in the Early Roman Empire: Some Opinions," in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, ed. Carl Deroux, vol. 6 (Brussels, Collection Latomus, 1992), 230, 235.

[22] See Lindsay C. Watson, "Two Problems in Horace *Epode* 3," *Ph.* 127 (1983), 80 n. 1 for an overview of the previous scholarship. For a more recent and critically comprehensive approach to the poem, see now also Emily Gowers, *The Loaded Table: Representations of Food in Roman Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 280-310. While Gowers deftly explores the interconnection of garlic, virility, and the iambic

acter of the piece belies the ire of Horace, the epode can also be seen to straddle the boundary between invective and the aesthetic game-playing of erotic poetry.[23] My analysis regards the poem in a similar light but also considers how an appreciation of the physical appearance of the familiar garlic plant vivifies the imagery of the final scene in its play upon the popularly understood visual connections between it and the phallus.

The poet begins with a solemn protasis drawn from the world of judicial affairs but then immediately offers an ironic contrast (1-3): he identifies garlic, later to be linked to heat and thirst, with hemlock, which brings on death's creeping coldness.[24]

Parentis olim siquis inpia manu
  senile guttur fregerit,
edit cicutis alium nocentius.

If anyone ever breaks his father's aged neck
  With a sacrilegious stroke of the hand,
Let him eat garlic—more damaging than hemlock!

In the mock-heroic apostrophe to the toughness of proverbial rustics immune to the ravages of garlic, the sexually suggestive wordplay (*dura ilia*) establishes the erotic ambiance of the poem and graphically introduces the imagery of virility (4):

o dura messorum ilia!

Tough the loins of rustic reapers!

Ilia clearly signifies the genitalia in other poetic contexts, most notably Catullus *c.* 11.20 (*omnia ilia rumpens*), where Lesbia's insatiate

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tradition of aggression, especially by expanding her investigation to Horace's *Epodes* as a whole, her focus is primarily on the generic and literary aspects of the poem. As a result, the close connection between popular perceptions of garlic engendered not only by its reputed stimulative powers but especially by the physical appearance of the blooming plant, which gives the piece its final imagery, is neglected.

[23] Cf. Gowers, *Loaded Table*, 281 and 309. The interplay of the erotic and the dramatic evidenced in the piece is discussed by Peter Bing and Rip Cohen, ed. and trans., *Games of Venus* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 50: "If we are correct, these poems are not unlike puzzles or riddles. That is, they should be read for enjoyment as an aesthetic game. The designer of each game has left the audience clues with which to reconstruct a more or less elaborated dramatic situation, identify the speaker(s), and the addressee(s), overhearer(s), etc., and try to gauge the intent of the actors and the nature of the action which their utterances are part of, perform, or represent."

[24] See Chapter Four, 143 n. 62. Legal parallels, parodies similar to Horatian language, and curses are cited in David Mankin, ed., *Horace: Epodes* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), 89. Cf. Gowers, *Loaded Table*, 300 and note also her interesting remarks about Horace's wordplay on *fel* (298). The text is that of S. Borzsák, ed., *Q. Horati Flacci Opera* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1984).

sexual activity is a powerful destructive force.[25] The adjective *dura,* moreover, has associations with an aggressive and invective masculinity diametrically opposed to the compliant softness characteristic of a passive nature. In fact, for Catullus and the Roman elegists *durus* and related words indicate an independent (and even soldierly) stance adopted in response to feminine domination and functioning as the masculine opposite to a state of both temperamental and physical impotence.[26] Thus the introductory section of the poem initiates a sexually oriented tone from the outset; and in light of the sympathetic interconnections outlined earlier, these lines establish their popularly understood subtext by directly linking the imagery of the poem itself to commonly held perceptions.

This awareness informs other imagery in the poem as well. The central section of the work (5-18) continues the erotic theme with the prominence of viper's venom and blood reinforcing the sexual associations (5-8):

> quid hoc veneni saevit in praecordiis?
> num viperinus his cruor
> incoctus herbis me fefellit? an malas
> Canidia tractavit dapes?

> What kind of poison is this
> That rages in my guts?
> Viper's blood boiled with these greens
> Hasn't tricked me, has it?
> Or is it that Canidia
> Laid out this awful feast?

The meal itself affects the poet's *praecordia,* the region of the body where both the digestive processes and the seat of the passions reside.[27] Cooked with greens (*his herbis*), moreover, the offending garlic lurks half-concealed among the other ingredients and represents the

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[25] See LS s.v., II C and the discussion in Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary,* 50-51. Cf. Cat. *c.* 63.5: *deuolsit ilei acuto sibi pondera silice* ("He [Attis] plucked off from himself the weight of his genitals with a sharp flint"); attendant textual difficulties and the solutions to them are discussed in Quinn, *Catullus,* 286. Gowers emphasizes only insufficiently the physical aspects of the use of *ilia,* accentuating instead the tensions between the rustic and the cultured aspects of Roman society (289-293) and referring rather to sexual jealousy engendered in the dramatic situation (304-306).

[26] Ellen Oliensis, "Canidia, Canicula, and the Decorum of Horace's *Epodes,*" *Arethusa* 24.1 (1991), 124-126 and n. 31. See also G. Nagy, "Copies and Models in Horace *Odes* 4.1 and 4.2," *CW* 87.5 (1994): 423-424. The premier example for the use of *dur-* words in this context is Catullus *c.* 8. For her part, Gowers (*Loaded Table,* 305) acknowledges the "sexual undercurrents" of the poem and refers to Horace's "language of love-sickness" and his "effeminacy (*mollitia*)" as set against the connotations accompanying *dura ilia.*

[27] Gowers, *Loaded Table,* 300-301; Mankin, *Epodes,* 91, ad. loc.

very body of the animal whose fluids produce such noteworthy effects.[28] Finally, the identification of the meal with a poisonous repast prepared by Canidia links the naturally stimulative elements of the ingredients with their supernatural counterparts in the realm of magic and especially love magic.[29] Even clearer sexual inferences come from the *exempla* recounted next (9-14):[30]

Ut Argonautas praeter omnis candidum
  Medea mirata est ducem,
ignota tauris inligaturum iuga
  perunxit hoc Iasonem,
hoc delibutis ulta donis paelicem
  serpente fugit alite.

When Medea was stricken with the leader
  Of the Argonauts, most radiant of them all,
She slavered Jason with this as he was getting
  Ready to bind the unfamiliar yoke onto the bulls;
And having taken her revenge on his wench
  With gifts besmeared with this, she fled on a winged serpent.

Medea's reliance on poisonous substances stands foremost in any mythological account of her powers.[31] Here the salve with which she annointed Jason is identified with garlic, but the emergence of this erotic element, dependent upon garlic's popular association with sexual stimulation, attests the substratum of popular belief protruding from the poetic landscape.

Yet this intersection of the magical, the pharmacological, and the sexual has been largely overlooked. So while scholarly interpretation has ranged widely about what properties of garlic would prompt

[28] Mankin (*Epodes*, 91, ad loc.) envisions a porridge or soup rather than an uncooked *moretum*. It is entirely possible for the plant to have been included among the ingredients as greens (leaves) or even as the serpent-like flower stalk, in which case the visual imagery would have been even more vivid. Indeed, ancient evidence exists for the use of the foliage in medicine (Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 1.152.3: τῆς δὲ κόμης τὸ ἀπόζεμα ["a decoction of the foliage"]); for references to modern uses, see M. R. Mezzabotta, "The Meaning of *spica* in Cato *Agr.* 70.1," *Glotta* 70 (1992), 101 n. 10. The immature scape (flower stalk) and floral cluster from hardneck varieties are often removed by modern garlic growers in late spring or early summer in order to help ripen the underground bulb and to increase yield; the tender flower clusters are then sold as a vegetable delicacy. See W. T. Angell and L. A. Ellerbock, "1992-93 New York Experiments," *The Garlic Press* 18 (Fall 1993), 8.

[29] Canidia's powers in love magic are prominent in *Epode* 5, for example. Cf. Gowers, *Loaded Table*, 301.

[30] Such *exempla* play an essential role in the *Epodes*. See Mankin, *Epodes*, 88; for the specific sources of these *exempla*, 92-93 and 96.

[31] E.g, Euripides *Medea* 717-718, where Medea herself, speaking to Aegeus, makes clear a link to male sexuality:

παύσω γέ σ' ὄντ' ἄπαιδα καὶ παίδων γονὰς
σπεῖραί σε θήσω· τοιάδ' οἶδα φάρμακα.

Medea's actions, one thing is clear: it seemed logical to at least one commentator that Medea anointed Jason to inflame his desire. This observation comports well with the underlying popular traditions that the physically stimulative properties of the plant were responsible for its role in sexual attraction.[32] The emphasis next shifts to erotic revenge when Medea's actions combine the two associations already made, toxicity and sexuality, in poisoning the robe of Jason's bedmate (*paelicem*) with garlic.[33] The dual role ascribed to the poisonous yet stimulating herb echoes the conceptual polarity often seen in the use of other substances and magical objects.[34] Finally, the account of Medea's escape reintroduces the serpent motif of lines 5-6 and, with the incorporation of the wordplay of *alite* and *alium*, further links the plant with its reptilian counterpart.[35]

The final lines of the section ironically echo the contrast of the opening lines. The imagery first reestablishes the true nature of garlic, describing how the plant's incomparable heat and dryness surpass the Apulian summer in intensity. Progressing from the imagery of nature to the familiar literary and mythical past, the comparison of garlic's fiery effects to those of the incendiary cloak that claimed Hercules' life (15-18) closes the poem's central portion:

nec tantus umquam siderum insedit vapor
  siticulosae Apuliae,
nec munus umeris efficacis Herculis
  inarsit aestuosius.

Such great heat of the constellations never settled
  Upon thirsty Apulia
Nor did the gift ever burn fiercer
  On the shoulders of mighty Hercules.

I will put an end to your being childless
And I will make you sow the seed of children; I know such drugs.

[32] P. H. Peerlkamp (*Q. Horatii Flacci Carmina*, 2nd ed. [Amsterdam: Muller, 1862], 340) suggests that the salve was intended to inflame Jason's passions rather than to help defend him against the fiery bulls: *ut pari amore flagraret, quo ipsa flagrabat.* Peerlkamp also notes Horace's association of heat with garlic: *Horatius ubique allio vim igneam tribuit.* On this and on other interpretations see Watson, "Two Problems," 85 n. 28. Gowers acknowledges Medea's romantic self-interest but ascribes her actions to the magical powers of garlic as a love spell and overlooks Peerlkamp's observation (303).

[33] Gowers, (*Loaded Table*, 305-306) assigns to the actual participants in the dramatic events of the poem roles drawn from the mythological stories of Medea and Hercules.

[34] See, for example, Chapter Two on λιγγούριον.

[35] Gowers *Loaded Table*, 303. Yet while seeing in *alite* a verbal echo of *alium*, she recognizes only the association of garlic as an antidote to a serpent's poison. The physical appearance of the plant which makes up so much of the popular association with the reptile yet remains overlooked.

In their description of garlic's effects on the poet, these lines merge natural historical observations and popular perceptions with the more abstract and elusive concepts engendered by both the magical and the erotic arts. The imagery of heat deriving from the stars (*vapor siderum*) introduces the motif of the Dog Days when the rising of Sirius (*Canicula*) with the sun was thought to intensify the heat of summer.[36] Yet the identification of garlic's fiery effects with the familiar meteorological topos is significant because of popularly understood associations with male sexuality; and upon examination the imagery of the passage is seen to partake of the conceptual polarity familiar from examples already discussed. For instance, in the archetypal account of the wilting heat of midsummer and its effects, Hesiod's *Works and Days* 582-588, the voracious sexual appetite of the female reaches its apogee just as masculine desire and potency wither (586-588).[37] In addition to the natural explanation for male sexual failure, women's sexual desire and the heat of female passion are enhanced by the heat of summer and contribute to draining the strength of the male. Thus, the very geographical and meteorological imagery, which in the Horatian poem emphasizes the heat-inducing properties of garlic, evokes a contrastive picture of the impotent male. The magical element is likewise present in the allusion to the witch Canidia whose association with the heat of the Dog Star and whose interactions with Horace in other works (*Sermones* 1.8 and *Epodes* 5 and 17) are depicted as evidence of the duality of *impotentia*: on one hand, a loss of rational control by the female and on the other, male sexual debility.[38] Thus in lines 15-16 the warming and stimulative character of garlic, the underlying premise upon which *Epode* 3 is fashioned, is balanced by a corresponding popular awareness that impotence may also be the result of heat generated under identical circumstances.

Drawn from the imagery of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*, a similar union of erotic heat and magical intervention entwined in a polarity of influence is depicted in the subsequent lines. Deianira's attempt to arouse the passion of Heracles by sending him a robe smeared with a mixture of the blood of the centaur Nessus and the poison of the

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[36] Daniel Garrison, *Horace, Odes and Epodes* (Norman, Oklahoma and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 175. Cf. Gowers, *Loaded Table*, 294 and n. 67. For the Dog Star in general see R. C. Ceragioli, *Fervidus Ille Canis: The Lore and Poetry of the Dog Star in Antiquity* (Diss. Harvard University, 1992).

[37] Cited in Chapter One, 24.

[38] See Oliensis, "Canidia," 121. Cf. Nagy, "Copies and Models," 423. The "twinned meanings" of *impotentia* represent the verbal equivalent of the polarity of influence in the realm of magic.

Hydra exemplifies the ambiguity inherent in substances that partake of properties from both the natural and the supernatural worlds.[39] The sexual subtext brought over into the Horatian piece, moreover, is striking. For example, like the *vapor siderum* of the previous lines, heat activates the destructive poison and initiates its deadly progress upon the unknowing Heracles.[40] Centaurs, too, were the prime examples of rampant and unbridled masculinity; and according to some accounts, Nessus's sperm was also included in the deadly mix.[41] In addition, the Hydra was a type of serpent,[42] and in this context its venom is particularly appropriate for reducing Heracles, the ancient exemplar of virility, to a weakened and feminized state.[43] Accordingly, Hyllus describes the searing effects of the substance upon his father as if it had resulted from the venom of a deadly and vicious viper.[44] And like other cases already discussed, since the term *venenum* (or φάρμακον) represents elements of both love magic and of poison, of both pollution and its cure, Deainira's gift to Heracles and the Horatian incorporation of the episode rely for their effectiveness on its popularly understood conceptual ambiguity.[45]

It is, however, the final lines of the epode (19-22), often seen as merely a humorous curse called down upon Maecenas for having

[39] Sophocles *Trachiniae* 569-577 (for the instructions of Nessus), 710 (Deianira's claim of having been bewitched), and 716-718 (Deianira's realization of the power of the Hydra's poison). Herbert Mursurillo (*The Light and the Darkness: Studies in the Dramatic Poetry of Sophocles* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967], 72) ascribes the effects of the ointment to "preternatural power." The blood of the centaur also figures in Horace *Epode* 17 (30-32) where heat, passion, and magical influences are also prominent and the diction echoes that of the poem under consideration: *ardeo / quantum neque atro delibutus Hercules / Nessi cruore...* See Mankin, *Epodes*, 280-281. For the mixture of the centaur's blood and the Hydra's bile as a controlling substance, see Faraone, "Deianira's Mistake," 123-126.

[40] Deianira recounts the effects of the sun's rays on the tuft of wool used to apply the poison to the robe (*Trach.* 695-700), and Hyllus describes how the heat from the sacrificial altar begins the process that leads to the suffering and death of Heracles (*Trach.* 765-768). Mursurillo (*The Light and the Darkness*, 71 n. 1) suggests that the description of the tunic's effects may actually derive from "contemporary accounts of the effects of various herbs or chemicals (e.g., sulphur) used by shamans and witches."

[41] Apollodorus 2.7.6.6; Diodorus Siculus 4.36.5. See also duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, 98-100 and Dora Pozzi, "Deianira's Robe: Diction in Sophocles' *Trachiniae*," *Mnemosyne* 47.5 (1994), 583 n. 15.

[42] The Hydra was the offspring of the snakelike Echidna and Typhaon. Hesiod, *Theogony* 313-315; Apollodorus 2.77-80.

[43] Pozzi, "Deianira's Robe," 584.

[44] *Trach.* 770-771: εἶτα φοινίας ἐχθρᾶς ἐχίδνης ἰὸς ὡς ἐδαίνυτο ("Then the poison of the bloody and hated viper began devouring him").

[45] Cf. Gowers, *Loaded Table*, 300 n. 95 and 303 (where the "*pharmakon*" cited at *Trach.* 485 [*sic*] must actually refer to φίλτροις at *Trach.* 584). Easterling (*Trachiniae*, 162, on *Trach.* 710) notes that Deianira's bewitchment is also one of love. See also duBois, *Centaurs and Amazons*, 100-101 and Pozzi, "Deainira's Robe," 585.

played a practical joke on the poet,[46] that best exemplify the subtextual nature of the evidence:

at siquid umquam tale concupiveris
  iocose Maecenas, precor,
manum puella savio opponat tuo,
  extrema et in sponda cubet.

But look, Maecenas; if ever you wish something
  Like this, you jester you,
May your little sweetie put a hand to your kiss,
  And lie at the farthest edge of your bed.

This humorous and plaintive address to Maecenas derives from the sexual substratum underlying the entire poem.[47] The orientation toward the popular is likewise emphasized here by poetic diction, with the incohative *concupiveris* further setting the tone by its intimation of urgent desire.[48] In light of both the stimulative nature of garlic and its dangerous properties foregrounded earlier in the poem, at this point it becomes clear that Horace does not wish a painful bout of gastritis for Maecenas but rather that he suffer the agonies of unsatisfied sexual desire.[49] It is the erotically stimulative and not the destructively poisonous aspects of the herb that lend subtlety to the lines. And so while it is true that once having eaten garlic Maecenas will become offensively malodorous, he will also become especially amorous; in such a state he will then be rejected because of the garlic's olfactory unpleasantness. Yet the embarrassing sexual rebuff will be all the more unbearable because of garlic's physically stimulating effects, and the comic depiction of the aroused Maecenas draws on the pervasive sexual imagery of the entire poem which has set the stage for the humorous irony of these final lines.[50] Finally, in contrast

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[46] E.g., by Eduard Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 69: "The petty anticlimax at the end (21 f.) is in harmony with the mocking spirit of the poem; the touch is so light that the apparent curse sounds almost like an affectionate compliment to Maecenas."

[47] Watson ("Two Problems," 80-83) discusses earlier approaches while offering some interpretive remarks of his own. For poetic impact and affinities with other Horatian verse, see Henri Hierche, *Les Épodes d' Horace: Art et Signification,* Collection Latomus, ed. Carl Deroux, vol. 136 (Brussels: Latomus, 1974), 146.

[48] Both *concupisco* and *suavium* are colloquial usages. See Mankin, *Epodes,* 97-98.

[49] Suggested only inadequately by Watson, "Two Problems," 81. Cf. the imagery of the aroused Megarians at Aristophanes *Ach.* 526 discussed in Chapter Three. Gowers (*Loaded Table,* 305) stresses the punitive aspects of Horace's final wish: "Nevertheless a sexual punishment *is* appropriate in a poem that is full of sexual undercurrents..." Mankin (*Epodes,* 97-98) likewise sees a parallel to the judicial language of the opening lines of the poem.

[50] A similar interplay of sexuality and suggestive humor may be present in the discussion about the properties and the benefits of onions (κρόμμυα) upon the male psyche at Xenophon *Symposium* 4.7-9.

with the first-person description of his own painful condition by the poet, Maecenas's sexual dilemma, while the exact opposite of that of the impotent groom in Catullus *c.* 67, does share with it one important feature: the sexual condition of both is described and interpreted by another. In neither case is the sufferer given the opportunity to express his own feelings.

Other works whose thematic basis is male sexual failure afford a better appreciation of the problem. For example, a self-depreciating tone of irony is also an important element in Ovid's treatment of his own sexual failure (*Amores* 3.7), and the elegy itself also skillfully interweaves the standard imagery with recurrent personal and societal anxieties about impotence into an account of one specific incident of erectile failure.[51] For example, the usual association of the causes of impotence with the paralyzing coldness of poison clearly marks the intersection of popular belief with literary treatment of the affliction (13-14):

> tacta tamen veluti gelida mea membra cicuta
> segnia propositum destituere meum;
>
> My equipment listlessly abandoned my purpose
> As though touched by chilling hemlock,

In the midst of his description of those specific magical influences and practices that I have discussed earlier, especially the binding erotic magic (27-30, 35-36) the intent of which was the paralysis of a victim's emotional or psychological functions,[52] the poet depicts the theme of male sexual dysfunction as a widespread maleficent contagion as he introduces into the poem those traditional elements of witchcraft which can affect the entire natural world (31-34):

> carmine laesa Ceres sterilem vanescit in herbam,
> deficiunt laesi carmine fontis aquae;
> ilicibus glandes canatataque vitibus uva
> decidit et nullo poma movente fluunt.

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[51] Note the description in Bing and Cohen, *Games of Venus,* 45: "In a word, *Amores* 3.7 may be read as a defense, logically directed by the speaker to the girl, explaining to her he has merely had a bad day, may be getting old, and at any rate has probably, as she (ironically) suggested, been bewitched...Perhaps by trying to hide the real cause of his failure and distract her from the charge that he has come sexually exhausted (*aut alio lassus amore venis* 80) he means to recover from the embarrassing situation in which he's been caught and proceed with the suit."

[52] See also Chapter Two, 18-80. For the particulars about the processes involved in the efficacy and purposes of *defixiones,* see Christopher A. Faraone, "The Agonistic Context of Early Greek Binding Spells," in Faraone and Obbink, *Magika Hiera,* 8-9.

The grain stricken by enchantment fades into unfruitful greenery,
And the waters of the spring so stricken also fail.
Enchanted, the acorns from the holm oak and the grape fall to earth,
And fruits come flowing down at the touch of no one.

Such poetic representations of a world contaminated by magic are marked both by inversions of the natural order and by an instability of perceptual boundaries. These speculations by the narrator, moreover, point to a recognition of the essential uncertainty that underlies the human relationship with the entire sensible world and that plays an important role in the way both the tangible and the intangible elements of a framework of sympathetic associations reveal themselves and affect human activity.

In addition to the frequent and pervasive attention paid to the magical causes for impotence in the poem and the poet's situation of that magic within a wider sympathetic framework with implications for the natural world, personal and societal uneasiness about sexual dysfunction remains an important facet as well. For example, specific concerns about the sexual infirmities of old age surface in two places in the piece; and as a result the narrator's identity as a man and his social position are called into question. As we have already seen, the narrator's initial plaint appears in a series of questions capped by a rueful admission of his lover's opinion of him (17-20).[53] The second instance, however, is even more telling in the way in which it reflects the narrator's critical self-image, for he introduces renowned mythological examples of aged males as he laments his inability to respond to his bedmate before defining himself as less than manly (41-43):

illius ad tactum Pylius iuvenescere possit
Tithoniusque annis fortior esse suis.
haec mihi contigerat, sed vir non contigit illi.

Nestor would be able to grow young again at her touch,
And Tithonus become stronger than his years.
She had touched me, but no male was it who touched her.

Both the unsuccessful narrator and his unsatisfied lover, moreover, openly express their acknowledgment of the social disrepute accorded impotence. While he does concede the possibility of magical contagion as a cause for his problem and admits that shame is also a factor (37-38),[54] the frustrated and sarcastic young lady is not as forthcoming; but, conscious of her own image, she avoids a more public embarrassment by pretence (83-84):

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[53] See Chapter Two, 78.
[54] Ibid.

neve suae possent intactam scire ministrae,
dedecus hoc sumpta dissmulavit aqua.

And so her attendants couldn't tell she hadn't done it,
She covered up the disgrace with the washing-off routine.

This public denial of events, however, serves only to underscore the importance of maintaining the appearance of normalcy in the face of both public scrutiny and the wider instability suspected through possible magical intervention.

Significantly, although the frequent appearance of magical influences that pervade the poem may give the impression that the origins of this particular bout of impotence lies in witchcraft, the real concerns of the narrator himself surface in his own appreciation of the immediate physical and social repercussions of the incident. For instance, in keeping with the serio-comic tone of the piece, he expresses no real apprehension about the long-term effects of the affliction. On the contrary, his evocation of prior feats of virility is both a self-reassurance of future success and a humorous exaggeration in the face of very real embarrassment (23-26).[55] Moreover, since the unexpected suddenness of the affliction limits the availability of solutions to those already at hand, recourse to magical remedies, which would require some foresight and preparation, is of little use. As a result, it is only the failure of physical interaction and individual imagination that concerns the lovers.[56]

Insult by the dissatisfied partner and self-recrimination by the narrator both appear at several points in the poem as well (77-78; 3-6, 15-16, 45-54), and these demonstrate further the predominance of the interpersonal and the personal aspects of the piece. Finally, in a topos frequently encountered in similar generic contexts, the narrator also addresses his once-failing and now shamelessly erect member (69-72):

quin istic pudibunda iaces, pars pessima nostri?
sic sum pollicitis captus et ante tuis
tu dominum fallis; per te deprensus inermis
tristia cum magno damna pudore tuli.

Why not just lie there modestly, you worthless appendage?
You're leading your master on.
Because of you I was taken when my offenses were down
And had to endure stinging losses.[57]

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[55] Ibid.

[56] In addition to considerations of attractiveness, the purely stimulative activities of the narrator's partner (7-12; 73-74) and the narrator's own sexual fantasies (63-64) are the only real attempts at a solution.

[57] Compare the other examples in Chapter One, 29-30.

Insofar as he assumes a socially superior position in the address, the narrator's individual analysis of the situation contributes a more reflective and reactive element to his personal concerns about the work's depiction of male sexuality.[58] As a result, the overall effect of the specifically personal aspects of impotence in the piece is that these thematic components, while intertwining the standard magical imagery and considerations of psychological and social significance, actually minimize the importance of the former in favor of the latter.

Similar concerns about male sexual dysfunction surface in the narrative of Encolpius in the *Satyrica,* and these reflect the whole range of cultural, social, and literary elements contributory to the discourse about impotence.[59] Their appearance in the work acknowledges a popular reliance upon sympathetic substances and related practices as remedies for impotence. In addition, however, the fictional representation of a sympathetic instability and of the environment that supports it depicts the general ineffectiveness of magical practices as cures for sexual dysfunction. As I have already shown, an instability of effect is one of the chief characteristics of the network of sympathetic influences believed to exist in and to be derived from natural substances. For example, with origins in the particular conceptual system that links by allusive association plants of the genera *Allium* and *Arum* with serpents and with naturally occurring or artificially fashioned magical objects, such sympathetic influences could be wilfully directed or altered by appropriate human intervention. As a result of this inherent instability, the effects of sympathetic influence are dependent upon the intentions and the activities of those who manipulate their sources. Those aware of the ways to operate within this framework were in a position of superiority; those with no access to the means of directing such influences or to substances and activities that deflect it must have been acutely aware of their own position of weakness. In the case of the malign influence that brings on impotence, moreover, whether originating in the vengeance of a divinity or in popular magic,[60] a dual impact is

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[58] Richlin (*Garden*, 118) compares the relationship to that of master and tricky slave.

[59] For the most part, questions of Encolpius's character are of secondary interest for this particular study. Nonetheless, such factors as his role as narrator and as the subject of narration remain as important facets of the work. These have presented problems; see Roger Beck, "Some Observations on the Narrative Technique of Petronius," *Phoenix* 27 (1973), 42-61, particularly 42-44, where Beck sees the *Satyrica* as a tale edited by an older Encolpius who uses verse insertions to enhance his performance as a storyteller while relying on imagination and fantasy to embellish his narrative. For a response see Slater, *Reading Petronius,* 46-49 and especially n. 26.

[60] Encolpius believes that Priapus is the cause of his impotence since during the episode with Quartilla he is charged with a violation of the sacred rites of the god

felt: a personal disappointment in the immediate effect and an anxious helplessness to remedy the problem.

Since on one level the narrative and dialogue of the *Satyrica* establish these fluid sympathetic concepts as the basis of Encoplius's impotence and his attempted remedies for it, a resultant and dominant preoccupation with the basic instability of the sensible world is an important element in the work as a whole. The randomness of occurrences recounted by Encolpius, moreover, results in a narrative in which he constantly seeks to identify some way to exert control over the events that beset him and in which he struggles to establish a solid basis upon which to interpret their meaning.[61] Examples of this pervasive sense of instability appear early in the narrative; and in addition to the personal interpretation given them by the narrator, they also reflect elements of popular entertainment.[62] For example, Encolpius's description of how he came to be led by an old woman to a brothel reveals both his confusion at the turn of events and the uncertainty of his expectations (7.1-4):

> 'rogo' inquam 'mater, numquid scis ubi ego habitem?' delectata est illa urbanitate tam stulta et 'quidni sciam?' inquit consurrexitque et coepit me praecedere. divinam ego putabam et...subinde ut in locum secretiorem venimus, centonem anus urbana reiecit et 'hic' inquit 'debes habitare'. cum ego negarem me agnoscere domum, video quosdam inter titulos nudasque meretrices furtim spatiantes. tarde, immo iam sero intellexi me in fornicem esse deductum.

(17.8). From this and from his prayer to Priapus begging for forgiveness and for the restoration of his virility (133.3) it may be argued that an outside and vengeful divine power is effectively preventing his sexual performance. Yet despite the clear connection with the typical wrath of a enraged god, there is also the suggestion of sympathetic magic in his situation since the physical organ affected is identical with the chief characteristic of Priapus. In this case, then, the concept of *similia similibus curantur* is at work. Cf. the powers of the "Great Toe" of St. Cosmo discussed in Chapter Two (63).

[61] Slater, *Reading Petronius*, 240-241: "Insofar as we can detect any purpose in Encolpius's restless adventures, it is his search for a frame which will contain those experiences."

[62] The seemingly random nature of the events recounted by Encolpius in several episodes of the *Satyrica* has also prompted commentators to see in the work an appeal to theatricality in the way the characters react to the occurrences over which they may have very little control. For example, Slater (*Reading Petronius*, 33-34) suggests that both Encolpius and Ascyltos are prone to role-playing and that they rely on dramatic and literary models in their improvisational responses to situations of uncertainty. See now also Costas Panayotakis, *Theatrum Arbitri: Theatrical Elements in the* Satyrica *of Petronius* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995) who posits a formal patterning of the events depicted in the *Satyrica* after specific plots drawn from the mimic theatre. According to this model such mimic elements as the recognition scene and the hidden treasure motif, while deriving from the popular stage, contribute to the pervasive sense of instability.

> "I ask you, dear lady," I said, "do you know where I live?" She was delighted by such foolish manners and said, "Why ever wouldn't I know?" and then got up and began to go on ahead of me. I was thinking that she was pretty insightful and...then right away when we came into a rather out-of-the-way place, the crone pulled back a drapery and said, "Here is where you ought to live." When I was saying that I did not recognize the house, I see men between some placards and naked whores strutting stealthily about. Slowly, indeed already too late, I realized that I'd been brought down to a brothel.

Similarly, in the episode of the stolen cloak (12-15) there also exists the same thematic tension both between expectation and actuality and between insight and ignorance. In this case, a commonplace item that had been previously owned and then subsequently lost by Encolpius and Ascyltos, a tattered *tunicula,* is actually much more valuable than its external appearance suggests, for gold has been sewn into its lining. It later serendipitously reappears in the possession of two country folk unaware of its real value when they come to market to sell the lowly garment for whatever price it would fetch. What is more, at the same time Encolpius and Ascyltos are attempting to sell a seemingly more valuable cloak (*pallium*) that they themselves have stolen and that the two rustics immediately and vociferously claim as their own (12.2-6). Thus, while the *tunicula* is recognized immediately by Encolpius and Ascyltos as the valuable asset that it really is, its actual worth lies concealed from its current owners; and in the ensuing confrontation over the two garments, the debate over real and perceived worth confounds even the knowledgeable local merchants.[63] These incidents, then, stand as paradigmatic for the way the world is represented throughout the *Satyrica;* for like those with the insight and the special knowledge to penetrate superficial appearance, only those persons conscious of the existence of the ubiquitous sympathetic powers thought to influence the natural world are able to discern the real state of human affairs in an environment of flux and uncertainly.

As might be expected, the thematic incorporation of instability and uncertainty into the narrative is especially significant in those individual episodes of the *Satyrica* that portray a world in which nothing happens as expected.[64] In several prominent instances this world

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[63] The thematic tensions between external appearance and reality also have literary and philosophical significance in this episode, for embedded as well in the account is a criticism of the specious ethical stance of the wandering Cynic preachers familiar in the work's contemporary urban landscape. See John McMahon, "A Petronian Parody at *Sat.* 14.2-14.3," *Mnemosyne* 50.1 (1997), 77-81.

[64] For the concept of deceptive appearances in the Milesian tale of the Widow of Ephesus (111-112), see Conte, *Hidden Author,* 104-107.

lies at the mercy of frightening supernatural elements, and certain episodes are prominently marked by accounts of witchcraft, of shape-changing, and of a difficulty in comprehending the true nature of events. Contentwise, the tales themselves reflect popular perceptions of the world, and their language represents a common cultural currency readily understood by readers and, presumably, the guests at Trimalchio's dinner party where the two most significant stories are recounted.[65] The account by the dinner guest Niceros about his encounter with the werewolf (*versipellis*) Orcus (61-62) attests to culturally shared anxieties about the unstable nature of the everyday world. For instance, in the course of his transformation, not only does Orcus himself become a wolf, but even his clothes are turned to stone (62.8; cf. 62.12). Yet an actual belief in the veracity of such tales is also at issue in this context. The freedman's disclaimer before he begins his account reveals the palpable tension between the opinions of the learned establishment and common cultural perceptions when he prominently mentions the reaction of the former to popular apprehensions about this instability.[66]

In Trimalchio's story of the malevolent witches who replace a young boy with a straw doll, an even more direct intervention of magic results in another physical transformation (63). Again, appearance and reality blend (63.8):

> 'sed dum mater amplexaret corpus filii sui, tangit et videt manuciolum de stramentis factum. non cor habebat, non intestina, non quicquam: scilicet iam puerum strigae involaverant et supposuerant stramenticium vavatonem.'

> But while the mother was embracing the corpse of her son, she touched it and saw that it was only a handful of straw. It had no heart, no insides, not a thing: evidently the witches had already flown off with the boy and had put a straw doll in its place.

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[65] Slater, *Reading Petronius,* 144. Cf., however, Hubert Petersmann, "Religion, Superstition and Parody in Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis,*" in *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel,* ed. H. Hofmann, vol. 6 (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), 77-78, who contends that any references to supernatural powers in the *Satyrica* are purely parodic, that both upper and lower levels of society as they are represented in the work held very little stock in any supernatural forces save perhaps Fortuna, and that as depicted by Petronius, superstition alone was pervasive among the freedmen.

[66] Note *Sat.* 61.4: *Itaque hilaria mera sint, etsi timeo istos scholasticos ne me derideant* ("And so let these things be just for laughs, even if I'm afraid the schoolroomers here will mock me for telling them"). The fellow freedmen of Niceros, however, in accepting the actuality of such supernatural occurrences, are less intimidated by the presence and pretensions of the *scholastici* (Encolpius, Ascyltos, and Giton); indeed, they are quite ready to confront them and the learned culture they seem to represent. See Conte, *Hidden Author,* 125-130 and 175. For the slapstick nature of the werewolf tale and its epic parody, see Evan T. Sage, *Petronius: the Satyricon,* rev. Brady B. Gilleland (New York: Irvington 1982), 230-232.

Particularly significant is Trimalchio's anxious end to the tale, in which he stresses the existence of familiar beings who nevertheless possess an extraordinary power to reverse the natural order (63.9):

> Sunt mulieres plussciae, sunt nocturnae, et quod sursum est deorsum faciunt.
>
> There are women of so uncanny an insight who come out at night, and that which is up they make down.

Once concluded, the immediate effect of Trimalchio's story is to reveal anew Encolpius's own belief in the existence of such malign powers and his superstitious willingness to act to ensure his personal safety (64.1):

> Miramur nos et pariter credimus, osculatique mensam rogamus Nocturnas ut suis se teneant dum redimus a cena.
>
> We were amazed at the tale and believed it at the same time, and having kissed the table we asked the Ones of the Night to hold themselves to their own affairs until we made our return from the dinner.

In his fearful acknowledgment of the reality of Trimalchio's first-hand account, then, Encolpius also verifies the existence of an unquestioning acceptance of the entire conceptual framework upon which it is based.[67]

In a number of more specific instances throughout the extant part of the *Satyrica,* Encolpius's first-person accounts of his attempts at sexual regeneration provide ample indication that he recognizes the concept of sympathetic influences at work. The first such testimony occurs after Encolpius has been brought to the brothel described earlier where he unexpectedly encounters Ascyltos, brought there under false pretences as well. After their reunion Enclopius describes the scene (8.4):

> adeo ubique omnes mihi videbantur satyrion bibisse.
>
> It sure looked to me like everybody all over the place had downed some satyrion.

In this description it becomes evident that ingestion is the means by which the sexually invigorating qualities of the plant-derived substance were thought to effect the human body; indeed, *satyrion* was considered even more effective if taken with wine. Yet since it was recognized as a sexual stimulant because of its visual associations

[67] For the significance of language in establishing a sense of truth in the two tales, see L. Callebat, "Langages des *Satyrica* de Pétrone," *Biblos* 68 (1992), 9.

with the sexual organs,[68] the plant itself could effect sexual arousal through purely sympathetic influences as well by stimulating desire through mere contact.[69]

In other episodes depicting Encolpius's struggles with his impotence, the use of *satyrion* plays a more direct role. For example, in the lengthy encounter with Quartilla and her assorted subalterns (16-26.6), at the beginning of which the presence of unseen supernatural influences is also prominently emphasized,[70] Encolpius relates a number of incidents that may involve attempts to overcome his sexual inability.[71] In most of these instances he seems only to be undergoing physical stimulation by another person;[72] in one, the aphrodisiac *satyrion* again plays a role, and its mention clearly reflects the perceived dual nature of the substance. On one hand, like his earlier description of *satyrion*-drinkers (8.4), Encolpius himself ingests a large quantity of it (20.6-7):

> Ancilla risu meo prodita complosit manus et 'apposui quidem, adolescens; solus tantum medicamentum ebibisti?' 'Itane est' inquit Quartilla 'quicquid satyrii fuit Encolpius ebibit?'
>
> The servant girl, prompted by my laughter, clapped her hands and said, "I put it right here for sure. Did you drink so much medicine all by yourself?" Quartilla added, "Is that it? Did Encolpius drink down whatever there was of the satyrion?"

Conversely, the ingestion of such a large amount of the potent substance may in itself have doomed Encolpius to sexual failure, a fact recognized by Quartilla and the servant girl.[73] Ascyltos, on the other hand, has *satyrion* applied to his body externally (21.1):

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[68] See Chapter Two, 88.

[69] Cf. Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 3.128: ἱστορεῖται δὲ ὅτι καὶ εἰς τὴν χεῖρα ληφθεῖσα ἡ ῥίζα ἐρεθίζει πρὸς ἀφροδίσια, σὺν οἴνῳ δὲ ποθεῖσα μᾶλλον ("It is observed that the root held onto the hand provokes one to sexual activity; this is more so if it is taken with wine"). Cf. Faraone, "Deianira's Mistake," 124.

[70] *Sat.* 17.5 (Quartilla): *Utique nostra regio tam praesentibus plena est numinibus ut facilius possis deum quam hominem invenire* ("At any rate, our region is so full of divinities right here at hand that you can more easily find a god than a human").

[71] *Sat.* 20.2, 20.7, 21.1-2, 23.4-5, 24.1-4. In general those major incidents of the *Satyrica* in which Encolpius attempts to solve directly the problem of his impotence appear toward the end of the present text; the Quartilla episode is an exception to the pattern, and it may be misplaced. See Sullivan, *Satyricon*, 45-53; also H. D. Rankin, "Petronius, Priapus, and Priapeum LXVIII," in Rankin, *Petronius the Artist*, 54-55 n. 7.

[72] I do not consider the Quartilla episode to contain cures *per se* for Encolpius's *chronic* condition; power and sexual reluctance, rather, appear to be thematic in the episode. In this case, then, Encolpius has not sought a remedy but has had it forced upon him. Rankin ("Petronius, Priapus, and Priapeum LXVIII," 55-56) is undecided about the source of Encolpius's problem. Cf. Daniel Blickman, "The Romance of Encolpius and Circe," *Atene e Roma* 33 (1988), 8 n. 7, who considers Encolpius cured in the Quartilla episode.

[73] Christopher Faraone, "Encolpius' Impotence and the Double Dose of

> illinc puella penicillo, quod et ipsum satyrio tinxerat, Ascylton opprimebat
>
> Over there the little girl was doing in Ascyltos with a little brush which itself she had dipped in satyrion.

The former account attests to a reliance upon the substance in its capacity primarily as an ingested medicinal remedy; in the latter case, however, the efficacy of *satyrion* may be attributed more to those inherent sympathetic properties believed to be effective in restoring dormant sexual ability by their mere touch.[74]

It is in this episode as well that Encolpius's sexual dysfunction is first encountered as the primary thematic element in the text.[75] More importantly, however, it is during the incident with Quartilla that Encolpius first offers reflective analysis about his dysfunctional state. As the impending danger of the scenario looms larger, his description of the chill overtaking him evokes an image of a fearful shiver in a situation out of control; but it also obliquely acknowledges the sensation of a progressive coldness that will result in the eventual deadening of his sexual function (19.3):

> Ut haec dixit Quartilla, Ascyltos quidem paulisper obstipuit, ego autem frigidior hieme Gallica factus nullum potui verbum emittere.
>
> When Quartilla had said these things, Ascyltos was dumbstruck for a moment. I, however, had become colder than a winter in Gaul and couldn't let out a peep.

Despite his fear and the cold grip of inertia, however, Encolpius initially recovers sufficiently to regain some control. This he accomplishes by voicing his reliance upon the culturally privileged concept of male superiority to women (19.4):

> tres enim erant mulierculae, si quid vellent conari, infirmissimae scilcet; contra nos, si nihil aliud, virilis sexus.
>
> They were three mere women, pretty much weaklings at that. On the other hand, if nothing else, we were men.

Satyrion," in *The Ancient Novel: Classical Paradigms and Modern Perspectives*, ed. James Tatum and Gail M. Vernazza (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College, 1990), 114-116. Faraone claims that, like other "male-targeting" aphrodisiacs, *satyrion* is poisonous when taken in excessive doses.

[74] Slater, *Reading Petronius*, 40 n. 7.

[75] Encolpius apparently still enjoyed full sexual function when he had relations with Ascyltos (9.9-10) and later when discovered with Giton by Ascyltos (11.1): *alligo artissimis complexibus puerum fruorque votis usque ad invidiam felicibus* ("I drew the boy close with tight embraces and took the enjoyment of my happy wishes to the point of being envied").

A few lines later Encolpius validates this claim to virility by asserting that he can perform well in any possible sexual combat between the three adventurers and their captors (19.5):[76]

> sed et praecincti certe altius eramus; immo ego sic iam paria composueram, ut si depugnandum foret, ipse cum Quartilla consisterem, Ascyltos cum ancilla, Giton cum virgine.
>
> But we had our clothes gird up really quite high; why, what's more, I had already made up the pairings, so that if it came to a tussle, I'd go to the mat with Quartilla, Ascyltos with the servant girl, and Giton with the virgin.

The irony of the entire situation, however, becomes evident in the ensuing, though lacunose, descriptions of sexual activity, where both the bravery of the trio and their boasts about virility are severely tried. For example, at some point during the ordeal itself impotence has overtaken Encolpius and begins the course of the psychological effects that persist throughout much of the remainder of the work.[77] Echoing his earlier self-description (19.3), he laments the lifeless state of his member when it fails to respond to stimulation afforded by some unidentified individual (20.2):

> Sollicitavit inguina mea mille iam mortibus frigida.
>
> She agitated my private parts already chilled with a thousand deaths.[78]

His earlier speechless stupefaction reverberates in the imagery of the painful restraint that prevents him from even calling out (21.1):

> volebamus miseri exclamare, sed nec in auxilio erat quisquam, et hinc Psyche acu comatoria cupienti mihi invocare Quiritum fidem malas pungebat.
>
> We were in an awful state and wanted to yell. But there was nobody around to help. And over here Psyche kept sticking me in the cheeks with a hairpin when I wanted to call out for public protection.

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[76] Gareth Schmeling, *Studies in Petronius* (Diss. University of Wisconsin, 1968), 131: s.v. *depugnare.*

[77] A Freudian interpretation of the Quartilla episode suggests that Encolpius's impotence stems from an oedipal castration anxiety. According to this view Quartilla as the priestess represents the wife of the father figure Priapus. The shock of seeing the forbidden rites of the ithyphallic deity intimidates Encolpius to the extent that from that point on he is disabled sexually, reverting to a pure phallic fixation since he cannot succeed in the oedipal struggle. See Maria Kardaun, "The Encolpius Figure in Petronius' *Satyricon,*" in *Fathers and Mothers in Literature,* ed. Henk Hillenaar and Walter Schönau (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 62-63.

[78] The lacunose character of this section is problematic, but from the preceding words (*Ancilla quae Psyche vocatur...*) it may be assumed that Quartilla's servant is meant.

In the next section (21.2) a *cinaedus* assaults the two, but he is stopped by Quartilla. Encolpius reveals little about his physical reponses to this activity, but he is clearly disgusted by the attention.[79] A more sustained physical stimulation by a *cinaedus* is similarly ineffective (23.4-5):

> mox et super lectum venit atque omni vi detexit recusantem. super inguina mea diu multumque frustra moluit.
>
> Soon he came over on top of the couch and uncovered me although I was resistant. He did a grind over my privates for a long time and really without much success.

As a result of Encolpius's failure to respond physically in the face of the eager and energetic attentions of his assaulter, his social and cultural status is further demeaned. In this and the earlier depiction of a sexually aggressive *cinaedus,* both of whose portrayals echo Lucius's description of the priest Philebus and his effeminate coterie,[80] it is the traditionally passive sexual partner who reverses the cultural paradigm of male sexuality by assuming the physically active role.[81] Thus Encolpius, like the unfortunate groom of Catullus *c.* 67, finds both his virility and his self-image increasingly compromised as his readiness for sexual performance pales in comparison to that of one whose sexual and social status is by cultural tradition deemed lower than his own.[82]

Yet Encolpius's recurring sexual failure and his unwillingness to participate in the activities that typically mark the aggressive male are not the only indication of his loss of physical virility and the public debasement of his masculine status. Even as the narrator relating the fearful and uncertain atmosphere of the Quartilla episode, Encolpius is also deprived of both the opportunity and the actual ability to express his reactions to such threatening events with any

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[79] *basiis olidissimis inquinavit* ("He befouled us with stinking kisses").

[80] *Met.* 8. 24. 571; Chapter One, 45. For the physical similarity cf. Encolpius's description of the *cinaedus* (23.5): *profluebant per frontem sudantis acaciae rivi et inter rugas malarum tantum erat cretae ut putares detectum parietem nimbo laborare* ("Rivulets of acacia were flowing down his forehead as he sweated, and there was so much chalk-powder among the wrinkles of his cheeks that you'd think it was a wall suffering from being stripped away by a downpour").

[81] Even at this point, moreover, the underlying paradigm of instability and uncertainty again becomes evident. After he is brought to tears by the sexual activities, Encolpius asks for a cup of some type of liquid (*embasicoetas*) and is instead informed by Quartilla that what he has actually requested is a *cinaedus* (*Sat.* 24.1-2). Further information in Slater, *Reading Petronius,* 45 n. 21 and Panayotakis, *Theatrum Arbitri,* 46 n. 89.

[82] But cf. Slater, *Reading Petronius,* 49 n. 31: "On the other hand, we are not to imagine that he would enjoy relations with the *cinaedus* under any circumstances."

success beyond a simple plea for leniency. Thus, he begs for a ready dispatch of those punishing activities that wrack his body (20.1):

> 'rogo' inquam 'domina, si quid tristius paras, celerius confice; neque enim tam magnum facinus admisimus ut debeamus torti perire.'
>
> "I beg you, lady," I said, "if you are setting about something more stern, do it rather quickly; for we have not committed so great a trespass that we ought to die on the rack."

Physical restriction and sadistic abuse, moreover, prompt a more frustrating mental anguish (20.4):

> duas institas ancilla protulit de sinu alteraque pedes nostros alligavit, altera manus
>
> The servant pulled out from the fold of her robe two bands and with one she bound up our feet and with the other, our hands.

Once at the mercy of Quartilla, then, Encolpius is physically, psychically, and socially relegated to a condition of compliance with her will and that of her company.[83]

Encolpius's degradation occurs in other situations as well. We have already seen that an awareness of a sympathetic network of influences occurs in Encolpius's tryst with Circe. In the same passages, however, a debasement of his self-image intersects with those elements.[84] Weakened in his self-confidence by his impotence, he must endure her assault of indignant questions; afterward he begs her indulgence claiming that he was affected by adverse preternatural power.[85] After these humiliations and while Circe seeks comfort from her maid, Encolpius then torments himself with self-doubt (128.5):

> Ego contra damnatus et quasi quodam visu in horrorem perductus, interrogare animum meum coepi an vera voluptate fraudatus essem.
>
> On the other hand, utterly miserable, as though I was brought to shivering by some ghostly sight, I began to turn over in my mind whether I'd been cheated of true pleasure.

The entire incident has close parallels to the Quartilla episode although in this case the relationship between Encolpius's desire to

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[83] Viewing the characterization of Encolpius as the typical "comic self" and as the "sum of its appetites," Slater (*Reading Petronius*, 49) regards the violence of Quartilla upon the helpless and forcibly compliant Encolpius as an indication that he is not even in control of his own identity.

[84] The incidents from the episode with Circe treated here are discussed from another viewpoint in Chapter Two, 81-83 where the pertinent passages appear.

[85] *Sat.* 128.1-2.

perform and his ability to do so has been reversed.[86] Furthermore, because of Circe's need for a purely physical lover and because of her reliance on an element of dominance in the relationship, Encolpius's expectation that he might play the essentially masculine role in the encounter is again frustrated, in no small part because of his anticipation of impotence.[87] Later, after taking notice of Circe's medical advice and acknowledging the cautions of Chrysis about witchcraft (129.10), Encolpius replies with his own letter (130.1-7). In it, while pleading for forgiveness, he enumerates his offences and lays the blame on his penis, on divine intercession, or on his own sexual ineptitude. He also acknowledges Circe's warning about the paralysis that seems to have affected him. On his own initiative he then resorts to sexual abstinence and a change of dietary regimen to promote sexual arousal (130.7). Naturally, the importance of *bulbi* in Encolpius's remedy should not be overlooked: the incorporation of the highly regarded popular stimulant into the narrative comes attended by the wider spectrum of visual and sympathetic interdependencies examined earlier. Encolpius's belief in these influences form the very basis for his attempts to heal himself. They also indicate how the ability to recognize and manipulate their power can allow an afflicted individual to assert himself in the face of shame and rejection.

As a prelude to his second attempt to perform sexually with Circe, further magical attempts to remedy Encolpius's condition are begun in earnest (131.1-7); their depiction in the text, however, is more or less parodic.[88] His passive compliance is obvious in these activities as he undergoes a series of magical treatments administered by Chrysis and an old woman (*anicula*) skilled in the magical arts and who, we learn later, (132.5) is named Proselenos.[89] As in the Quartilla

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[86] Slater, *Reading Petronius*, 125-126. Slater also questions Encoplius's ability to actually understand what exactly it is he wants from Circe.

[87] Kardaun, "Encolpius Figure," 67. See also the more elaborate analysis of the entire Circe episode in Maria Kardaun, "Encolpius at Croton," *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel*, ed. H. Hoffman, vol. 6 (Groningen: Forsten, 1995), 87-101, especially 95 and 99-100 where Kardaun discusses the cold and aloof femininity represented by the Circe figure and its devastating effects on the virility of Encolpius. I take exception, however, with Kardaun's claim (98) that Encolpius considers his bewitchment (*veneficio contactus sum*) to come from only Circe.

[88] The possible origins in either mime or in serious magical practice of the activities portrayed in this and following episodes are treated by Panayotakis (*Theatrum Arbitri*, 171-173) who also contends that the representation of the procedures, despite their source, is intentionally imaginative and holds up to ridicule popular superstitions.

[89] The name has obvious connections with the moon (σελήνη), a fitting association for one involved in witchcraft.

episode, throughout these procedures Encolpius finds himself entirely at the will of others. The list of magical activities to which he is subjected is impressive; it includes the binding of Encolpius's neck with a multicolored thread belt (*licium varii coloris filis intortum*), the application of a mixture of spittle and dust (*turbatum sputo pulverem*) to his forehead,[90] and the chanting of a spell (*peracto carmine*),[91] all performed by the crone. Encolpius, on the other hand, even when he does takes any action on his own, becomes an active participant only at the bidding of Proselenos: he spits three times (*ter exspuere*)[92] and thrice drops down into his crotch some pebbles that were previously enchanted (*lapillos praecantatos*) and that were then afterwards wrapped in a crimson cloth (*purpura*). Thus, even when Encolpius does actively participate, it is still only at the direction of another and in accordance with precise directions prescribed by magical practice. This directed passivity continues when the physically inert Encolpius undergoes manual stimulation by the old women (131.5-7):[93]

> admotisque manibus temptare coepit inguinum vires. dicto citius nervi paruerunt imperio manusque aniculae ingenti motu repleverunt. at illa gaudio exsultans 'vides' inquit 'Chysis mea, vides, quod aliis leporem excitavi?'
>
> And so with her hands set into motion she began to test the powers of my privates. Sooner than you could say it, my thing obeyed her command and with a great stirring filled the hands of the old woman. And leaping with joy, she said, "You see, my dear Chrysis, you see what I have roused up as a hare for others?"

For the moment at least Encolpius's prowess has been restored.[94]

Once it has been established, this intimate association of enchant-

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[90] Pliny (*NH* 28.7.35-39) regards saliva as especially efficacious in magical matters. It is considered protection against serpents (*NH* 28.7.35): *Omnium vero in primis ieiuniam salivam contra serpentes praesidio esse* ("[I have shown that] among all things indeed the spittle of a fasting person is a defense against serpents"). For exactly how this works Pliny cites an earlier authority (*NH* 28.7.38): *rumpi...tradit...Ofilius serpentes si quis in hiatum earum expuat* ("Ofilius reports that serpents are burst open if anyone spits into their open mouth").

[91] The recital of a charm was made more efficacious by the accompaniment of spitting. See J. E. Lowe, *Magic in Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1929), 31, rather weakly citing Theocritus *Idyll* 2.62.

[92] Cf. Pliny *NH* 28.39.

[93] At this physical attention his organ responds immediately (*citius nervi paruerunt*). It is obvious that Encolpius is partially functional; the problem is that he cannot maintain an erection. This is considerably different from the Ovidian description of impotence (*Am.* 3.7), where the narrator cannot even achieve an erection. For his part, Blickman ("The Romance of Encolpius and Circe," 15) questions whether the encounter was "consummated," whatever that means specifically.

[94] Panayotakis, *Theatrum Arbitri*, 173.

ment with impotence continues to figure thematically in Encolpius's account. For example, Encolpius meets Circe again despite her taunts about his condition (131.10):

> itaque ut me vidit, paululum erubuit, hesternae scilicet iniuriae memor; deinde ut remotis omnibus secundum invitantem consedi, ramum super oculos meos posuit, et quasi pariete interiecto audacior facta 'quid est' inquit 'paralytice? ecquid hodie totus venisti?'
>
> And so when she saw me, she reddened a bit, mindful of yesterday's insult, to be sure. Then, when, with everyone else sent away, I sat alongside her as she beckoned me, she put a branch over my eyes; and as though there were a wall between us which made her brassier still, she said, "What's this, phalloplegic? Come here today as your old complete self, did you?"

Circe's jesting address (*paralytice*) to Encolpius recalls her earlier admonition about the perils of his condition (129.5: *paralysin cave*) and again reveals the network of folk medicinal associations underlying the work and echoing its language in popular application.[95] Nonetheless, Encolpius is in no way deterred by the verbal slight,[96] and the couple's initial embrace prompts him to comment that their kisses were not maleficently enchanted.[97] Furthermore, Encolpius's initial and renewed vigor clearly establishes the important role that magical intervention played in matters of sexuality, just as the enchanted pebbles were significant in the elaborate cure for his dysfunctional state.

After a lacuna of unknown length and a number of fragmentary episodes,[98] the presence of magic again becomes prominent when magical practices are combined with physical maltreatment in attempts at stimulation.[99] Indeed, Encolpius later suffers considerable physical abuse at the hands of Proselenos (134.3-6):

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[95] For example, according to Pliny (*NH* 20.24.85), citing Erisistratus, cabbage (*brassica*) is beneficial to the male genitals (*nervis*) and is administered to the paralyzed (*paralyticis*).

[96] *Sat.* 131.10: *'rogas' inquam ego 'potius quam temptas?'* ("You are asking me," I said, "rather than giving me a try?")

[97] *Sat.* 131.11: *non praecantatis osculis fruor* ("I enjoy kisses which were not already bewitched").

[98] *Sat.* 132.1 is a description of Encolpius's affair with the youth Endymion. Sage (*Petronius*, 205) suggests that the episode is misplaced, but this is rebutted by Sullivan, *Satyricon*, 70 n. 1. Konrad Müller and Wilhelm Ehlers (*Petronius Satyrica*, 3rd ed. [Munich: Artemis, 1983], 535) propose that Encolpius is relating the encounter to Circe. Other incidents include Encolpius's humiliation by Circe's household (132.2-5) after his failure to perform, his theatrical contemplation of castration as punishment, his address to his offending member (132.6-14), and his prayer to Priapus (133.5).

[99] Cf. Chapter Two, 84.

ac me iterum in cellam sacerdotis nihil recusantem perduxit impulitque super lectum et harundinem ab ostio rapuit nihilque respondentem mulcavit. ac nisi primo ictu harundo quassata impetum verberantis minuisset, forsitan etiam bracchia mea caputque fregisset. ingemui ego utique propter mascarpionem, lacrimisque ubertim manantibus obscuratum dextra caput super pulvinum inclinavi.

And she again led me not at all unwilling into the priestess's room and forced me over a couch. She seized a reed from the doorway and beat me even though I said nothing in response. And if the reed when it was weakened had not lessened the force of the blow at the first stoke, it would have perhaps broken my arms and head. I groaned in particular because of the masturbation, and with tears flowing everywhere I rested my head covered with my right hand upon the pillow.

Even in cases where religious and mythological elements contribute to the array of solutions Encolpius attempts, the imagery of the sympathetic network stands out. Thus, in the narrative immediately following (134.8-135.6), the promise of magical intervention reappears as well in the person of the priestess Oenothea.[100] For example, in preparation for the ritual sacrifice intended to effect a cure for his condition in Oenothea's hut, Encolpius is ordered to shell beans.[101] The proceedings are interrupted, however, when the old woman falls and the fire is exstinguished (135.1-3). While she leaves to get kindling material, an uncustomarily aggressive and rebellious Encolpius is attacked by geese, one of whom is Priapus's sacred goose. He kills it; and as we later learn (137.1-3), incurs anew the wrath of the ithyphallic god (136.4-5):[102]

itaque ad casae ostiolum processi...cum ecce tres anseres [sacri] qui, ut puto, medio die solebant ab anu diaria exigere, impetum in me

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[100] See Chapter Two, 83-85. The entire incident with Oenothea seems to have an extensive literary pedigree deriving ultimately from Callimachus's *Hecale*. See Slater, *Reading Petronius*, 180-181 and Panayotakis, *Theatrum Arbitri*, 178-179 with n. 46. Conte (*Hidden Author*, 107-110), moreover, sees the goose-slaying episode as parallel and complementary to the story of the Widow of Ephesus (*Sat.* 111-112) in Petronius's degradation of the idea of what he calls the "false sublime."

[101] *Sat.* 135.5: *partem leguminis super mensam effudit iussitque me diligenter purgare* ("She poured part of the beans onto the table and ordered me to clean them with care"). It is not clear from the text what purpose the beans will serve. Perhaps they are suggestive of the perceived role of flatulence in male sexuality. See above, Chapter Three, 122-126.

[102] On the narrative framework of the incident, see T. Wade Richardson, "The Sacred Geese of Priapus? (Satyricon 136, 4f.)," *Museum Helevticum* 37 (1980), 98-100. Richardson also points out (102, citing Pliny *NH* 30.49.143) that the goose does have some connection to sexuality, most likely in that it was associated with "general erotic symbolism which the ancients attached to many animals." However tenuous the connection with Priapus may be, I would suggest that similarity of the goose's neck to the appearance of the *iunx* and ultimately to the serpent and phallus may have contributed to the association of the god and the goose.

> faciunt foedoque ac veluti rabioso stridore circumsistunt trepidantem. atque alius tunicam meam lacerat, alius vincula calceamentorum resolvit ac trahit; unus etiam, dux ac magister saevitiae, non dubitavit crus meum serrato vexare morsu. oblitus itaque nugarum pedem mesulae extorsi coepique pugnacissimum animal armata elidere manu. nec satiatus defunctorio ictu, morte me anseris vindicavi.
>
> And so I came to the entranceway to the hut...when three (sacred) geese, who, I think, in the middle of the day were accustomed to demand from the old woman some regular feeding, made a rush at me and with, as it were, a mad screech stood around me as I shivered. And one tore at my tunic, another loosened the straps of my sandals and drew them away, and one, the leader and the director of this savagery, did not even hesitate to assault me leg with his saw-edged bite. And so forgetful of anything unimportant I wrenched off a leg of the little table and began to smash the most aggressive beast with my armed hand. Not satisfied with only a passing blow, I took out my vengeance by the death of the goose.

Encolpius's whole encounter with the geese is also parodically cast in an epic light with the inclusion of a five-line dactylic poem, and the comparison of the geese to the type of poisonous or repulsive birds famous from epic and tragedy is noteworthy (136.6):

> tales Herculea Stymphalidas arte coactas
> ad caelum fugisse reor caenoque fluentes
> Harpyias, cum Phineo maduere veneno
> fallaces epulae. tremuit perterritus aether
> planctibus insolitis, confusaque regia caeli
>
> Skyward they fled, deem I, like the Stymphalian birds
> Routed by the skill of Hercules
> And like the Harpies flowing with filth
> When Phineus's false feast dripped with venom.
> Quaking air trembled with unaccustomed wingbeats
> As did the confounded regions of heaven.

Encolpius's vision of himself as Hercules is especially ironic. It is his search for a cure for his sexual failures which has brought him to this pathetic and laughable point, and yet he identifies himself as playing the role of the very paragon of virility. Especially prominent too is his depiction of the poisonously befouled food from which the sinner Phineus is kept by the Harpies. Functioning as a poetic representation, this imagery echoes Encolpius's own situation of sexual hunger and deprivation and even more concretely recalls his own perception of his affliction as a magical infection (*veneno*).

Encolpius undergoes still more physical abuse and is subjected to more therapy by the application of specific plants deemed efficacious either because of their innate properties or their sympathetic influences. For example, Oenothea uses a variety of plants in one activity

to determine the outcome of the procedure (137.10):

> Infra manus meas camellam vini posuit, et cum digitos pariter extensos porris apioque lustrasset, avellanas nuces cum praecatione mersit in vinum et sive in summum redierant sive subsederant, ex hoc coniecturam ducebat.
>
> Below my hand she placed a drinking cup of wine, and when she had washed both my stretched-out hands evenly with leeks and parsley, she plunked some hazelnuts into the wine with a prayer and she surmised some interpretation from whether they stayed at the bottom or rose to the surface.

Yet Encolpius recognizes the true nature of affairs in this particular instance and suggests an incipient distrust of magical methods:[103]

> nec me fallebat inanes scilicet ac sine medulla [ventosas] nuces in summo umore consistere, graves autem at [plenas] integro fructu ad ima deferri.
>
> But it didn't escape my to notice that of course the empty nuts, the ones full of air, stayed on the top of the liquid while the heavy ones, the ones full of the entire fruit, sank to the bottom.

Yet despite this honest observation, in an ensuing (and lacunose) passage, Encolpius undergoes a healing procedure that combines plant materials with activities that are physically stimulative (138.2):

> profert Oenothea scorteum fascinum, quod ut oleo et minuto pipere atque urticae trito circumdedit semine. paulatim coepit inserere ano meo...hoc crudelissima anus spargit subinde umore femina mea... nasturcii sucum cum habrotano miscet perfusisque inguinibus meis viridis urticae fascem comprehendit omniaque infra umbilicum lenta manu caedere.
>
> Oenothea began bit by bit to insert into my anus a leather phallus which she'd covered with oil, powdered pepper grains, and nettle seed...Then that wickedly cruel old woman sprinkles my legs with this liquid...She mixes the sap of cress with that of southernwood, and with my genitals thoroughly doused, she grabs a bundle of green nettle and [begins to] strike everything below my navel with slow strokes.

This combination of plant materials seems especially appropriate for curing impotence given the popular perceptions of their sympathetic associations. The pepper (*piper*), for example, partakes of attributes from the both the physical and the sympathetic realms: its two vari-

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[103] The entire episode about the attempts to cure Encolpius's impotence is, in fact, a thematic criticism of belief in superstition. See J. Adamietz, "Circe in den *Satyrica* Petrons und das Wesen dieses Werkes," *Hermes* 123 (1995), 321, 324-326. Adamietz (332) also closely links the criticism of superstition with the theme of love-making as it appears in the Circe episode.

eties were deemed especially powerful in their heating properties and as an effective antidote to hemlock, itself the source of chilling and deadening properties resembling serpent venom.[104] The seed of the nettle (*urtica*) was thought to possess similar qualities and was also a sexual stimulant;[105] and while the pungency of cress (*nasturcium*) was noted for sharpening the senses, the plant was used to repel serpents as well.[106] Southernwood (*habrotonum*), famous for its strong aroma,[107] also has resonances in the sympathetic world, for in Lucan's account of the Psylii in Libya (*BC* 920-21) the herb drives away serpents, a belief also reported by Dioscorides.[108] It was, moreover, also effective against venom of all kinds, but especially against those whose effects were marked by that same numbing coldness generally associated with impotence.[109] More importantly, though, it was also considered a powerful aphrodisiac whose properties offset the effects of other substances that interfered with sexual activity.[110] Thus, in the abusive physical activities that Encolpius undergoes, there exists as well a

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[104] Theophrastus *HP* 9.20.2: θερμαντικὰ δὲ ἄμφω· δι' ὃ καὶ πρὸς τὸ κώνειον βοηθεῖ ταῦτα...("Both are warming, and because of this they especially render aid against hemlock"). Both varieties seem to be *Piper nigrum*; see Moisan, *Lexique*, 65. Cf., however, Pliny *NH* 12.14.26 who distinguishes three kinds based on the time of harvest. The black and white varieties known today are the fruits of the same plant, the former being harvested before ripening (Grieve, *Modern Herbal*, 627).

[105] Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 4.93.2: τὸ δὲ σπέρμα ἐπὶ συνουσίαν παρορμᾷ πινόμενον μετὰ γλυκέος ("Drunk with grape syrup, the seed is a stimulant to intercourse"). Pliny *NH* 22.15.31: *semen eius cicutae contrarium esse Nicander adfirmat* ("Nicander asserts that its seed is active against hemlock"); the reference is to Nicander's *Alexipharmaca* 201. Pliny specifies a number of varieties (*NH* 21.55.92); numerous species are today included in the genus *Urtica* of the nettle family (*Urticaceae*). See André, *Lexique*, 337.

[106] Pliny *NH* 20.50.127: *Sextius adicit ustum serpentes fugare...* ("Sextius adds that when burnt it [cress] puts serpents to flight"). So also Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 2.155.2, who also prescribes it in liquid for serpent bite. The Latin *nasturtium* is the modern *Lepidium sativum* and derives it name from *nares* ("nostrils") and *torquere* ("to twist") from its pungency; see Pliny *NH* 19.44.155. Pliny adds (*NH* 20.49.127), however, that the plant also deadens sexual desire. Dioscorides (*De med. mat.* 2.155.1) claims, however, that it *promotes* intercourse: συνουσίαν παρορμῶν. The plant has numerous synonyms for which see André, *Lexique*, 217. For the varieties of the Greek κάρδαμον and further citations, see Moisan, *Lexique*, 43.

[107] Pliny *NH* 21.34.60: *Habrotonum odore iucunde gravi floret aestate, aurei coloris* ("Habrotonum blooms in the summer with a pleasantly heavy aroma and with flowers of a golden color").

[108] Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 3.24.3: διώκει δὲ καὶ ἑρπετὰ στιβαδευόμενον καὶ θυμιώμενον ("Strewn about and as a fumigant, it drives off even serpents"). See above, Chapter Four, 145.

[109] Pliny *NH* 21.92.161-162: *contra ictus earum bibitur cum vino inliniturque, efficacissimum contra ea quorum veneno tremores et frigus accidunt...* ("Against their bites it is drunk or applied with wine, [and] it is most effective against those [animals] through whose poison trembling and chill occur..."). Cf. Dioscorides *De mat. med.* 3.24.3.

[110] Pliny *NH* 21.92.162: *si subiciatur pulvino, venerem stimulari aiunt, efficacissimamque esse herbam contra omnia veneficia quibus coitus inhibeatur* ("If it should be put beneath a

prominent sympathetic component. His involvement, willing or not, in a belief system based on the efficacy of remedies drawn from the natural world and on their corresponding magical elements prompts his acknowledgement that his problem can be attributed to witchcraft.[111]

Yet, while all the elements of the popularly accepted system of belief function thematically in the impotence-related episodes of the *Satyrica*, the success of these remedies as Encolpius recounts them is negligible. In fact, I contend that, in addition to revealing the obvious ineffectivness of the natural and magical remedies, his accounts function as the means by which the concerns of the physically and socially weakened male find expression. Perhaps the most productive avenue to follow in an examination of this process is by acknowledging Bakhtin's theories about the powerful nature of dialogue and narrative. Since it is in his view this particular aspect that separates the novel from other genres, the realistic self-portrayal by the narrator Encolpius enables him to reveal his experience of chronic sexual dysfunction in a way previously unexpressed. This process is enhanced by the serio-comic character of the *Satyrica* and its rejection of the classical genre theory.[112] Consequently, in his first-person narrative Encolpius steps outside the limited realm of specific discourse about impotence (such as appears in those works of Catullus, Horace, and Ovid discussed above) into the wider range of reflective comment about its effects on personal and social status.

As Bakhtin also points out, while a character's action is always bound to his discourse and represents his ideological position, it alone cannot reveal the way in which that character uniquely sees the world.[113] I would suggest, then, that such a position is ultimately

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pillow, they say that it prompts desire and that it is the foremost herb against all kinds of poisonings by which intercourse is curbed").

[111] Chapter Two, 82-83.

[112] Froma I. Zeitlin, "Petronius as Paradox: Anarchy and Artistic Integrity," *TAPA* 102 (1971), 638 and 642. This is not the place to discuss questions of generic criticism in relation to the *Satyricon;* such matters are discussed by Slater, *Reading Petronius,* 138-140 and now Gareth Schmeling, "The *Satyrica* of Petronius" in *The Novel in the Ancient World,* ed. Gareth Schmeling (Leiden: E.J. Brill. 1996), 479-482. Nor is it necessarily appropriate to question whether or not the *Satyrica* can be called a novel although Slater's opinion (*Reading Petronius,* 233-234) is that we have no alternative term for it. I would only suggest that as the serio-comic forerunners of the more recent novel, both the *Satyrica* and Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* exhibit characteristics of the modern "realistic" novel. See Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination,* ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 332 (emphasis original): "The fundamental condition, that which makes a novel a novel, that which is responsible for its stylistic uniqueness, is the *speaking person and his discourse.*"

[113] Bakhtin, *Dialogic Imagination,* 333-334; 335: "The activity of a character in a

critical of the failed curative activities based on sympathetic associations despite the popular reliance upon them and that it finds expression in his first-person portrayal of his trials and his failures combined with his interpretive reflections on them. Indeed, because the reader is entirely at the mercy of Encolpius's often-contradictory descriptions of events and because his self-involved discourse exhibits elements of self-accusatory confession, the entire work can only focus on what is important to the narrator.[114] Encolpius's description of his sexual dysfunction and of his attempts at its remedy, then, while consisting in part of concepts culturally accepted, represents at the same time a highly individualistic activity unaffected by any significant ties to the concerns of any larger community.[115] Encolpius's encounter with Quartilla, his relationship with Giton, and his involvement with Circe are all interwoven with pertinent dialogue and a self-reflective analysis of his situation. In each case his narrative voice allows him to participate in the discourse about impotence in a way that his fruitless participation in the many remedies for his condition does not. His intimate involvement with the narrative entails an active participation in recounting curative attempts and in foregrounding his personal concerns about his sexual and social status. Moreover, as Slater has pointed out about Encolpius's character, the control of the ambiguous nature of his sexual identity is dependent upon the propensity of his appetites to be manipulated by external forces.[116] This is evident from his description of the various ordeals over which he has little or no control.

In the Quartilla episode (16-26.6) Encolpius's passive role affords him the opportunity to actively enrich a serio-comic narrative with his personal sentiment about the experience. This process of transformation from passive to active changes the role of the narrator and his descriptions. Encolpius is transformed, as it were, from the stereotyped and powerless subject to the interpreter of the experience through his manipulation of the narrative itself. For example,

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novel is always ideologically demarcated: he lives and acts in an ideological world of his own...he has his own perception of the world that is incarnated in his action and in his discourse."

[114] See Gareth Schmeling, "Confessor Gloriosus: A Role of Encolpius in the *Satyrica*," *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*, Neue Folge 20 (1994), 207-224. An overview of the argument now appears in Schmeling, "*Satyrica*," 486-487.

[115] Bakhtin's formulation contrasts the epic hero with the hero of the novel. Nevertheless, the contrast can provide a simple yet important way of marking the distinction between the *Satyrica*'s popular belief systems that, like the epic, can be seen to represent community concerns, and its chief character's first-person narration of experience essential to the individualistic stance of the novel.

[116] Slater, *Reading Petronius*, 49.

his plea to Quartilla to hasten the sexual proceedings reveals not only his compliance and acknowledgment of the guilt he has incurred but also his (futile) attempts to manage his present painful situation. If, moreover, Slater's assertion that Encolpius has essentially no identity if he can be forced to sexually participate against his will, then the lack of success in performing sexually reasserts his identity.[117] Accordingly, the account of the stimulative activities that Encolpius endures enables him to control the text, since the disagreeable activities which he undergoes become the very source for the expression of his sentiments. Hence Encolpius's account of the assaults by the *cinaedus* (21.1, 23.2) clearly demonstrates an aversion to the physical impositions thrust upon him.

The anxieties of Encolpius appear more prominently in his relationship with Giton.[118] Encolpius's sexually active role with either Ascyltos or Giton is not problematic at first. In one episode (9.2-11.4), for instance, Giton's charge of rape by Ascyltos elicits an angry exchange (9.6-9.10) in which Encolpius is presumed an active and successful partner in sexual activity,[119] a status definitively maintained when Encolpius resumes his affair with Giton[120] but seriously diminished by Ascyltos's discovery of the two and his abusive beating and verbal humiliation of them.[121] Nonetheless, after the escape from Trimalchio's dinner party, Encolpius remains sexually capable with Giton; and he celebrates a night of bliss with a poem of pure delight (79.8):

qualis nox fuit illa, di deaeque
quam mollis torus. Haesimus calentes
et transfudimus hinc et hinc labellis
errantes animas. valete, curae
mortales. ego sic perire coepi.

God and goddesses, what a night that was,
How plush the love couch!
In our heat we melted together

[117] Slater, *Reading Petronius,* 243: "When Encolpius can be made to perform sexually against his will, how meaningful are the concepts of 'will' and 'Encolpius'?"

[118] Sullivan, *Satyricon,* 44-45.

[119] Encolpius degradingly insults Ascyltos with the charge of being a passive sexual partner: *muliebris patientiae scortum* ("a whore of womanly submission"), while Ascyltos in turn calls him a "filthy gladiator" (*gladiator obscene*) and a "nighttime knocker" (*nocturne percussor*). For the linguistic and cultural underpinnings of the episode with its "contrived literary banter," see Schmeling, "Confessor," 214-218.

[120] 11.1: *osculisque tandem bona fide exactis alligo artissimis complexibus puerum fruorque votis usque ad invidiam felicibus* ("Finally with kisses sincerely sought, I held onto the boy with the tightest of embraces and took delight with my wishes fulfilled to the point of envy").

[121] 11.4: *sed lorum de pera solvit et me coepit non perfunctorie verberare, adiectis etiam petulan-*

And we poured out our souls,
Wandering here and there with our kisses.
Ah, you mortal cares, take your good leave.
So have I begun to depart life!

It is only after Giton and Encolpius separate (80.7) and are then happily reunited with their relationship restored (91.1-91.9), that Encolpius begins to encounter problems with chronic impotence. After a sexual disappointment with Circe (128.1-5), he then fails to perform with Giton; and his masculinity is tauntingly called into question by the *puer delicatus* (128.7):

> Itaque hoc nomine tibi gratias ago quod me Socratica fide diligis. Non tam intactus Alcibiades in praeceptoris sui lecto iacuit.
>
> And so on this account I thank you because you love me like the pledge of a Socrates. Why, Alcibiades in his own teacher's bed wasn't as unmolested as I was in yours.

Thus Giton sarcastically assigns Encolpius an identity based on his poor sexual performance, that of the chaste Socrates.[122] Encolpius, on the other hand, pleads for understanding saying that once he knew who he was; now he has lost his identity (129.1):

> Crede mihi, frater, non intelligo me virum esse, non sentio. Funerata est illa pars corporis qua quondam Achilles eram.
>
> Take my word for it, bedmate, I don't know I'm a man; I don't feel it. That part of my body with which I was once an Achilles is dead and buried.

This open admission of his feelings demonstrates how the free expression of personal sentiment has enabled Encolpius to accomplish two things. At the level of the narrative, he expresses his own concern about his position in a stance accommodating Giton's jeering mockery. Beyond that, however, his answer clearly defines the personal impact of sexual dysfunction and publicizes the negative effects of the humiliation he has endured.

Encolpius's account of his repeated attempts at intimacy and his chronic sexual failure with Circe (126-134) exhibits the same dichotomy of purpose in his reflections upon his condition either through dialogue or through epistolary exchange (129.3-130.8). In each case there are close similarities with his reply to Giton: the rhetoric of accommodation predominates on one level; on the other,

tibus verbis, 'sic dividere cum fratre nolito' ("But he loosened the belt from his pack and began to lash me with abandon, adding these especially brash words: 'Won't share with your dear brother, will you?'").

[122] Cf. Plato *Symposium* 217a-219d.

Encolpius again establishes the viewpoint of the victim of impotence and reidentifies himself in terms of his affliction while openly admitting guilt for the activities that prompt his condition.[123] For example, in his reply he portrays himself as young and fallible but also as a great sinner the result of whose misdeeds is impotence (130.1):[124]

> Fateor me, domina, saepe peccasse, nam et homo sum et adhuc iuvenis.
>
> I confess that I have often committed grave error, for I am human and still young.

For his errors he begs forgiveness even if it entails punishment,[125] calling himself a weaponless soldier, a common metaphor for impotence (134.4):[126]

> Illud unum memento: non me sed instrumenta peccasse. Paratus miles arma non habui.
>
> Remember this one thing: it wasn't me, my equipment was what failed. I was a ready soldier; I just didn't have the weaponry.

Such discourse highlights the essential internal and external conflict of the impotent male: an emotional willingness to be sexually active blunted by a sense of powerlessness originating in a social and cultural environment of privileged virility. During his second failing attempt to perform with Circe, moreover, Encolpius regains his social and personal status only long enough to reply to her sharp jest about his condition (131.10).[127]

Encolpius becomes an active particpant in his quest for virility through a narration of the actions he takes, for he assumes the responsibility of remedying impotence. For instance, his use of *bulbi*, popularly associated with male sexuality, shows his reliance on commonly accepted remedies as a means of determining his own sexual condition, a tendency seen earlier in the treatment of magic stones and amulets.[128] The account of his own remedies includes his capacity for self-discipline as well. (129.8):

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[123] As shown earlier, the defense of his sexual inability at first rests on magic affliction.

[124] Cf. Ovid *Am.* 3.7.19-20. For the elements of confession in this passage see, Schmeling, "Confessor," 221.

[125] 130.4: *sive occidere placet, ferro meo venio; sive verberibus contenta es, curro nudus ad dominam* ("If it please her to kill me, I'll come with my sword; or if you are content with beatings, I'll run naked to the lady").

[126] See Adams, *Latin Sexual Vocabulary*, 20-21.

[127] See above, 204.

[128] Chapter Four, 168-173.

> Hinc ante somnum levissima ambulatione compositus sine Gitone cubiculum intravi. Tanta erat placandi cura ut timerem ne latus meum frater convelleret.
>
> From that point before sleeping and refreshed by a short walk, I went into the bedroom without Giton. My concern for pleasing Circe was so great that I was afraid that my bedmate might make a move on me.

Thus, even though prompted by Circe's admonition, Encolpius's sexual abstinence exhibits a considerable personal commitment despite his clear attachment to the boy.

The involvement of Encolpius with the world of sympathetic associations and magical ritual is often accompanied by personal reflections on the actions he takes. A very instructive episode is Encolpius's killing of Priapus's goose (136.4-137.8), an animal whose appearance may suggest elements of the underlying network of associations discussed above.[129] Significantly, however, in the rebellious action of killing the goose, Encolpius rejects this framework of sympathetic influence and ritual practice so prominent in this part of the work. The general tone of the account is set by Oenothea's alarmed exclamations about the misdeed (137.1-3):

> at illa complosis manibus 'scelerate' inquit 'etiam loqueris? nescis quam magnum flagitium admiseris: occidisti Priapi delicias, anserem omnibus matronis acceptissimum. itaque ne te putes nihil egisse, si magistratus hoc scierint, ibis in crucem. polluisti sanguine domicilium meum ante diem inviolatum, fecistique ut me quisquis voluerit inimicus sacerdotio pellat.'
>
> But with her hands smacked together, she said, "You outlaw, you are even talking? You don't realize how great an outrage you have committed: you killed the pet of Priapus, a goose beloved of all the ladies. And so don't think you've done nothing, if the folks in charge knew this, it's off to the cross with you. You've dirtied my house with blood, never sullied before this day, and you've brought it about that anyone unfriendly to me who might wish to will drive me away from my priestess post here."

While a lacuna breaks up the continuity of the exchange, Encolpius's terse response is humorously yet assertively directed against belief in the supernatural and any special significance it may hold (137.4):

> 'Rogo' inquam 'noli clamare; ego tibi pro ansere struthocamelam reddam.'
>
> "Don't scream, please," I said. "For your goose I'll give you an ostrich."

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[129] See above, 205-206.

The sarcastic tone of the narrator as he describes the continuing emotional response of Oenothera also contributes to his disdain for her reliance upon magic. When Proselenos enters, Encolpius is just as disdainful of her emotional state (137.5):

> et ipsa flere vehementius coepit meique misereri tamquam patrem meum non publicum anserem occidissem.
>
> And she began to weep in powerful sobs and to express pity for me as though I'd killed my own father—rather than some common-property goose!

Thus the hero has come full circle: he rejects a reliance upon commonplace remedies and their supporting sympathetic framework.

As a result, in a way not possible in earlier portrayals of impotence, the self-reflective aspect of the narration, the reporting of exact dialogue between characters, and a first-person ridicule of traditional matters elevates the problem of male sexual dysfunction to a level concordant with the literary freedom of expression afforded by novelistic representation. We can conclude that the *Satyrica* itself takes the intersection of a belief in a sympathetic network of influences with literary expression one step further by showing how the failures of the impotent Encolpius which he himself reports in the text are superseded by the personal account of the victim himself. This process of transformation then becomes the means by which the humiliation and agony of the sexually dysfunctional male and his personal concerns about his condition can be resolved. Through the actual narrative the parodic nature of the *Satyrica* is incorporated into a critique of the traditional concepts of ritual and magical practice which are taken for granted in other literary representations of male sexual dysfunction.

AFTERWORD

At this point, having both surveyed from a distance and examined at close range the literary representations of impotence and the fossilized evidence for an associative network of sympathetic influences to which male sexuality was linked, I would like to revisit in summary form where this examination has led us and what it has revealed. From the outset I proposed to discern the contours of the literary landscape and to uncover there subsurface evidence previously overlooked in order to show how an awareness of popular ideas could inform the reading of ancient texts. When approached from a number of perspectives, the sources revealed that a popular awareness of the natural world formed an integral part of the ancient perceptions about male sexuality. The concept of συμπάθεια, the link between the sensible and the insensible worlds, and the belief system derived from it supported a network of intellectual associations linking particular elements of the natural world with the physical manifestations of virility. Indeed, this belief system served as a foundation for a number of well-known impotence remedies.

The ancient understanding of the essential properties of plants can still be seen in references to the reputedly stimulative properties of plants included under the general terms βολβοί and *bulbi* that appear in a variety of technical, historical, and literary works. Ancient observations of the visual and behavioral characteristics of animals, especially those of lizards and serpents, contributed to their association with male sexuality, especially in literary works of a humorous or abusive nature. Popular belief in the ability of snakes to rejuvenate themselves came to connect them closely with the sexual functions of the male organ, and their venom, by partaking of the cooling qualities of deadening poisons, was perceived as the kind of magical substance that can bring about impotence. These conceptual links to male sexuality also extended to those plants whose visual associations with both the male organ and serpents were considered sexually stimulative as well, and their innate properties, such as the ability to promote sensation of both external and internal heating, contributed to the belief in their ability to promote male sexual arousal. In the associative relationship of plants and serpents, sympathetic magic also played a significant role in that the essence of this influence was considered readily transferrable to objects. In particular the efficacy of magically charged stones and amulets in promot-

ing male sexual activity was based on both their visual features and other perceived interconnections with serpents and serpent-like plants. The ability to manipulate the powers of these objects, moreover, became a specific source of empowerment for humans who availed themselves of their sexually and socially reintegrative properties

The disparate elements of the network of associations having to do with male sexuality, moreover, may still be uncovered in places throughout the literary record. Yet it is only with a precise understanding of the foundations of the belief system and its various conceptual elements that the real import of these literary references can be realized. A careful examination of these instances reveals a substratum of popular belief marking those works whose depiction of the cultural landscape is of generically lower character; such literary evidence, however, tends to be merely contributory to the work's larger thematic environment. In the *Satyrica,* on the other hand, magical and dietary remedies for impotence are portrayed with graphic frequency and represent a substantial portion of Encolpius's account of his attempts at sexual reawakening. In addition to the mention of *bulbi* (*Sat.* 130.7), with their clear connections to virility, for example, the cultural connections of nettle (*urtica*), cress (*nasturcium*), and artemesia (*habrotanum*), whose stimulative properties figure prominently in one of the remedial procedures for impotence which Encolpius undergoes (*Sat.* 138.1-2), are indicative of the range of the conceptual association in the work. Yet it is his personal testimony that discounts the real effectiveness of these cures as they are accepted by his cultural peers throughout the narrative. Through the recounting of Encolpius's reflections on his situation and the dialogic interaction with other characters such as Giton and Circe, his first-person account functions as the real means by which his status is explained and by which a compassionate understanding for his condition is elicited.

This attempt to foster an intellectual and literary appreciation for the existence of the natural and supernatural bases of such popular concepts, however, necessarily falls far short of actually reconstructing the experienced reality of the intersection of the human with the natural world and the multiplicity of its intellectual expression. Thus, while the investigation of belief systems in the modern world ordinarily affords the researcher the opportunity to interact with living adherents and to sense in some very real way the perceptual framework upon which such a system of associations may be constructed, for their ancient counterparts it is impossible for the investigator to do more than to describe by analogy those temporally and culturally

distant conceptual foundations. Similarly, although in the case of ancient belief systems the surviving connections can still be located and identified from careful analyses of scattered evidence recovered from literary, subliterary, and material contexts, those intuitive and sensate associations made by the ancient psyche with the natural world are now lost, leaving only their fossilized intellectual remains as testimony to their once living and vibrant existence. The real challenge to the investigator of such original associations and their literary manifestations, I believe, is to reconstruct some sense of the ancient human reaction to the natural world both by carefully unearthing its petrified fragments and by promoting an appreciation of their living equivalents in the modern world. In both instances much yet remains to be done.

Plate 1. Inflorescence of garlic (*Allium sativum*) showing the mature φύσιγξ splitting open (photo by the author).

Plate 2. Immature flowering stalk of garlic (*Allium sativum*). Note the elongated φύσιγξ and general serpentine appearance (photo by the author).

Plate 3. Dried φύσιγξ of garlic (*Allium sativum*) after ripening indoors over the winter. Note the sprouting bulbils (δάκρυα)(photo by the author).

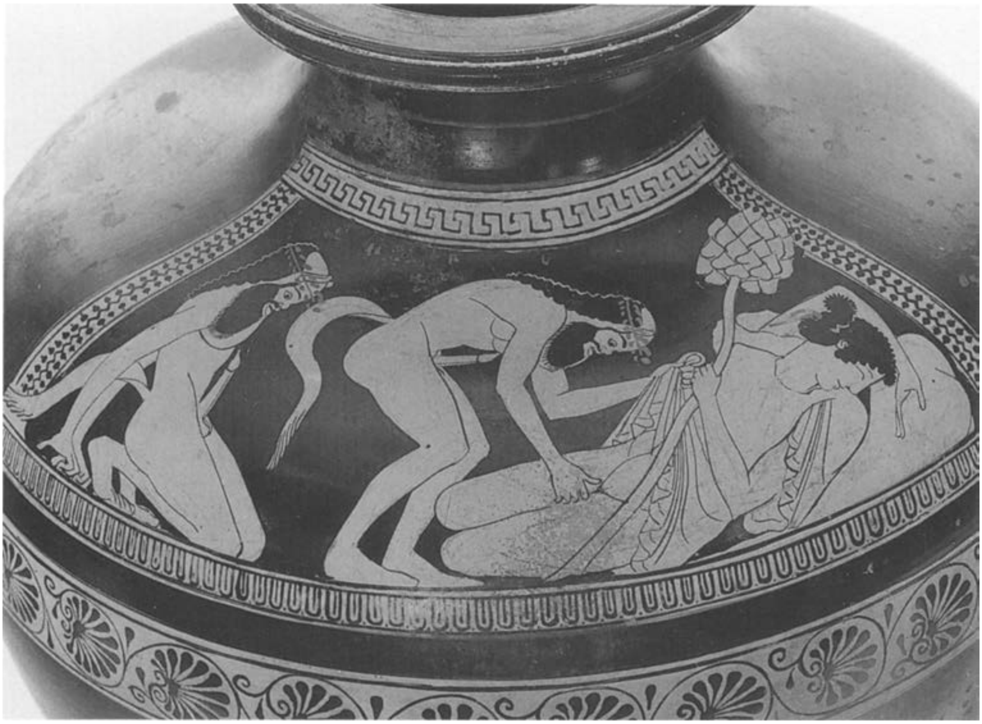

Plate 4. Red-figure hydria by Kleophrades with aroused satyrs approaching a sleeping Maenad (Rouen, Musée Départmental des Antiquités, inv. 538.3).

Plate 5. Onion (*Allium cepa*) with flowering stalk and leaves. Note the swollen appearance of both (photo by the author).

Plate 6. Inflorescence of *Arum maculatum* showing spathe and spadix (photo by Andrew N. Gagg, ARPS).

Plate 7. *Arum italicum italicum* showing mature inflorescence. Unopened floral structures are evident in the background (photo by Andrew N. Gagg, ARPS).

Plate 8. *Dracunculus vulgaris* in bloom. Note the prominent floral structure and variegated stem (photo by Andrew N. Gagg, ARPS).

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